



News Release

For Immediate Release

June 17, 2014

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NAFRA URGES KAISER PERMANENTE TO REVERSE DECISION THAT REDUCES FIRE SAFETY IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

*Kaiser Decision to Stop Purchasing Furniture with Flame Retardants
Based on Products No Longer on Market*

WASHINGTON (June 17, 2014) – The North American Flame Retardant Alliance (NAFRA), a group representing the leading manufacturers of flame retardant chemistries, today sent a letter to Kaiser Permanente Chairman and CEO Bernard Tyson urging him to reverse Kaiser Permanente’s decision to cease purchasing for its health care facilities furniture that contains flame retardants.

“Flame retardants are an important tool in the fire safety tool box. They represent an important layer of fire protection in hospitals, health care facilities, and medical offices,” President and CEO of the American Chemistry Council Cal Dooley said in the letter on behalf of NAFRA. “The use of flame retardants in upholstered furniture can help prevent fires from starting and/or slow the rate at which small fires become big fires, providing valuable time for persons to escape danger.”

The letter comes as flame retardants have played a measurable role in reducing the prevalence of fires across the country and have helped protect vulnerable communities, including the sick and elderly.

Flame retardants “helped the health care industry achieve a low incidence of fire-related deaths and injuries,” Dooley stated in the letter. “By prohibiting flame retardants in furniture at its facilities, Kaiser will increase its reliance on technologies designed to reduce the effects of a fire after it has started (e.g., sprinklers), rather than preventing fires from starting in the first place.”

The NAFRA letter notes that the decision by Kaiser Permanente is based on the potential health effects of polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs)—a group of flame retardants that are no longer on the market. All flame retardants on the market today are subject to review by the Environmental Protection Agency and other global regulatory agencies for safety.

For this reason, NAFRA urges Kaiser Permanente to “give further consideration to the recently announced policy for purchasing upholstered furniture.”

Members of NAFRA have requested a meeting with Kaiser Permanente to discuss the scientific evidence showing the role flame retardants play in saving lives.

The full text of the letter can be found [here](#).

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The American Chemistry Council (ACC) represents the leading companies engaged in the business of chemistry. ACC members apply the science of chemistry to make innovative products and services that make people's lives better, healthier and safer. ACC is committed to improved environmental, health and safety performance through Responsible Care®, common sense advocacy designed to address major public policy issues, and health and environmental research and product testing. The business of chemistry is a \$770 billion enterprise and a key element of the nation's economy. It is one of the nation's largest exporters, accounting for twelve percent of all U.S. exports. Chemistry companies are among the largest investors in research and development. Safety and security have always been primary concerns of ACC members, and they have intensified their efforts, working closely with government agencies to improve security and to defend against any threat to the nation's critical infrastructure.

