

# Physicians for Social Responsibility - Tampa Bay: COME JOIN US

The mantra for Physicians for Social Responsibility is to prevent what can't be cured. PSR is the medical and public health voice working to prevent the use or spread of nuclear weapons and to slow, stop, and reverse global warming and toxic degradation of the environment. Additionally, PSR has a commitment to social equity to the degree that all should have an opportunity for a basic standard of health and social justice as well as a freedom from structural violence.

Started in 1961 by Boston cardiologist Bernard Lown as a response to the health effects of atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons, the group, over the years, expanded its mission to include the environment and issues of social justice. As the US member of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, it was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1985 for the demonstration of the adverse health effects on children by atmospheric testing.

There are over 30 chapters across the US and over 32,000 members/activists who are physicians, nurses and concerned citizens. PSR works to educate the public about and advocate for government policies to support its positions. Not all members belong to a chapter. For instance, there are about 1500 members in Florida, but PSR – Tampa Bay, the newest of the chapters and the only chapter in Florida, has only about 40 members.

One of us, DLM, was first exposed to PSR as a member of PSR – Los Angeles (over 2000 members) while working in Southern California in 2006. The meetings were very interesting and covered important timely topics. There was even a well-attended Saturday Symposium at UCLA on the public health consequences of the war in Iraq. When I returned to Tampa I wanted to join the local chapter, but found there was no chapter in Florida. Using a membership list from National PSR, I held an exploratory meeting after which Lynn Ringenberg and I decided to start our own: PSR – Tampa Bay.

PSR-TB is in its infancy. We are forming a board to meet regularly to handle issues of chapter importance. Also, we plan to have quarterly dinner membership meetings with speakers on pertinent issues.

This article is an invitation to all physicians in the Tampa Bay area to join our group. This can be done as easily as a membership to PSR by visiting [psr.org](http://psr.org). You will then be on our E-mail list for all notifications. However, we would also welcome those who wish to be more actively involved – even

to the point of serving on our board. The cost to join PSR is as little as \$30.00. The board of PSR-TB will determine if there should be chapter dues and, if so, how much.

Since our inception in January 2008, PSR-TB has been involved in local presentations of national interest. In conjunction with the USF College of Public Health, PSR-TB sponsored the noted New York Times reporter and author Stephen Kinzer on the topic of *The Folly of Attacking Iran*, in March 2008. In conjunction with "Peace Week," at USF this past fall, PSR-TB sponsored Nathaniel Raymond from Physicians for Human Rights to speak on torture and PSR board member Ira Helfand, MD to speak on the public health effects of a limited nuclear engagement.

On March 26-27, 2009, we will co-sponsor with the USF COPH (for its 25th anniversary) grand rounds at Tampa General Hospital and All Children's Hospital, as well as a symposium for the public on *The Threat to Healthy Living by Climate Change and Environmental Toxins*. The symposium is focused towards healthcare providers and community and business leaders in the Tampa Bay area. Former Hillsborough County Commissioner, Jan Platt, will present an award to T. Terrell Sessums, the political driver for the 1967 Florida Legislature special act to create the Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County, one of the first of its kind in the U.S.

At our most recent chapter meeting, January 12, 2009, held at the Wine Exchange in Hyde Park, we welcomed our student chapter (through the USF College of Medicine) and heard Jason Waters, the chief compliance officer of the EPC-HC discuss the relationship between TECO and the City of Tampa.

Please contact either of us with questions or comments. We believe in the mission of PSR and know many of you do also. PSR-TB is a vehicle for physician, nurse and citizen involvement in the most crucial issues on our planet. You may formally join our chapter through [psr.org](http://psr.org) (click on *support PSR > Become a member > type "Tampa"* in the box *If Chapter or event, please name*) or just ask one of us to be put on our chapter e-mail list.

Physicians for Social Responsibility – Tampa Bay, 2 Tampa General Circle, Suite 5008, Tampa, Florida 33606, (813) 259-8752, [ring@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:ring@tampabay.rr.com) <http://www.psr.org>. PSR is a 501(c)(3) organization.



## Environmental Awareness



Lynn Ringenberg, M.D.  
President, PSR-TB  
[ring@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:ring@tampabay.rr.com)



Donald L. Mellman,  
M.D., MPH, MBA,  
FACS  
Vice President &  
Treasurer, PSR-TB  
[dmellman@post.harvard.edu](mailto:dmellman@post.harvard.edu)