

NIEHS issues update on GuLF STUDY progress

By Eddy Ball

In the first issue of a new series of newsletters, NIH [GuLF STUDY \(Gulf Long-term Follow-up Study\)](http://www.gulfstudy.nih.gov/en/index.html)

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Director and NIEHS Epidemiology Branch Chief Dale Sandler, Ph.D., announced the completion of enrollment and the beginning of phase 2.

According to Sandler, almost 33,000 people have joined the study of the short-term health effects of human exposure to oil and dispersants during the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill and its clean up. With phase 1 interviews and home visits completed, researchers are now recruiting enrollees for participation in phase 2, which will focus on the long-term health effects of oil and dispersant exposure.

"We have the information we need to begin evaluating any short-term health effects of the spill," Sandler wrote in the [first issue](#)

([https://gulfstudy.nih.gov/en/](https://gulfstudy.nih.gov/en/GuLF%20STUDY%20newsletter,%20Issue%201%20(English).pdf)

[GuLF%20STUDY%20newsletter,%20Issue%201%20\(English\).pdf](https://gulfstudy.nih.gov/en/GuLF%20STUDY%20newsletter,%20Issue%201%20(English).pdf))

of the newsletter.

Among the early findings released in the newsletter are the demographic profiles of the participants - information about gender, age, race, occupation, exposure setting, and state of residence.

Entering phase 2

NIEHS is leading the GuLF STUDY, with the support of many local community groups that will do their part to spread the word. For phase 2, the study team is asking enrollees to help researchers answer important question about long-term health effects by:

- Responding to requests to confirm or update contact information.
- Completing a brief follow-up telephone interview about individual health and lifestyle.
- Taking part in a more detailed clinical exam at a local medical center.

Progress reports and continuing outreach efforts

With enrollment complete, the Gulf STUDY team is beginning the difficult task of analyzing and interpreting the large amount of data on the 33,000 participants. In addition to phone interviews with all enrollees, researchers made home visits to 11,200 participants to complete a brief medical exam and collect blood samples.

Regular updates during the remainder of 2013 and into 2014 will report the results of the interviews, medical exams, and blood samples, as they become available.

The GuLF STUDY will continue community outreach information sessions, with the next scheduled to take place in early 2014 in Mobile, Ala. NIEHS scientists have also participated in media tours, to boost recruitment and inform residents of affected states about the progress of the study.

Several celebrities have volunteered their time to raise awareness of the study, including Phil Robertson, patriarch of television's "Duck Dynasty." The first issue of the GuLF STUDY newsletter includes a message from Robertson encouraging participants to stay involved.

Contacting the GuLF STUDY team is easy

- Hotline - 1-855-NIH-GULF (1-855-644-4853); Hours: Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (CST); Sunday, Noon to 5 p.m. (CST)
- Website - www.gulfstudy.nih.gov (<http://www.gulfstudy.nih.gov>)
- Email - info@gulfstudy.nih.gov
- Social media - Find us on Facebook and Twitter



In addition to her work with the GuLF STUDY, Sandler oversees several other large-scale NIEHS epidemiological studies of environmental health, including the Agricultural Health Study and the Sister Study. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)

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