National Advisory Environmental Health Sciences Council

NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL) Report

September 2022

The NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL) OCPL is the first source of news and information about the institute. The communications team has broad expertise and provides a range of services to support the institute's ground-breaking research, and to share its discoveries with members of Congress, local governments, public health officials, the media, and communities throughout the world. Christine Flowers directs OCPL.

This report reflects OCPL highlights since the June 2022 Council Report.

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- Environmental Factor (the NIEHS online newsletter)
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I. Events

Catalytic Workshop Series. NIEHS is hosting a Catalytic Workshop Series July-September 2022 that focuses on developing a framework for demonstrating the value of the exposome in environmental health. The first workshop was held July 22, followed by August 5, 12, 19, 26 and 31.

- NIEHS OCPL developed posters for the event, promotes the meetings through social media and provides recaps in various newsletters.

Climate Change and Health Initiative. NIEHS OCPL continues to work with leadership at NIEHS and other participating Institutes and Centers to promote this initiative.

- In July, Rick Woychik, NIEHS/NTP director, contributed a post, Climate Change and Health Initiative to Expand Research, Build Resiliency, to the NIH Director's Blog.
- OCPL updates the NIH Climate and Health Initiative pages. This includes posting all funding and career opportunities and developing social media posts.
- OCPL also helped support the registration and promotion of the August 26 Information Session for the Climate and Health Scholars Program and the June 17 Information Session for Potential Applicants of the Research Coordinating Center. This includes posting the announcement, the presentation, FAQs and the video.
- As part of the NIH Climate Change and Health Seminar Series, NIEHS co-hosted with Fogarty International Center a webinar on June 22, 2022, featuring Andy Haines, M.D., from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- In late May, OCPL developed a fact sheet Reducing Health Risks From Warming Temperatures and Weather Disasters to highlight the important NIH research needed to address climate change.
- OCPL also developed web pages and materials and shared information with numerous audiences about the 2022-2023 NIH Climate and Health Scholars Program. OCPL also supported the registration and meeting logistics for the Information Session Webinar that was held on August 26 for potential applicants.

Endocrine Society 2022 Annual Conference – NIEHS Exhibit and Staff Presence. In June, NIEHS OCPL exhibited at the ENDO2022 conference in Atlanta, GA.

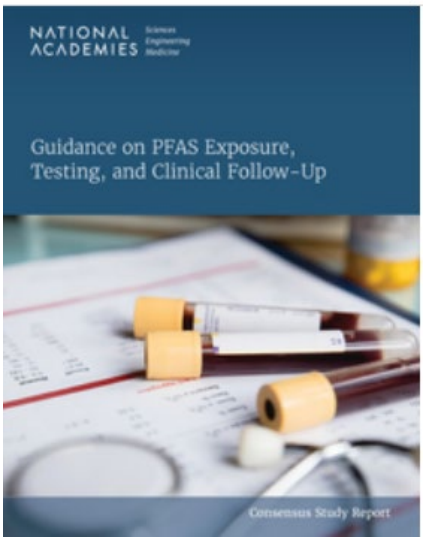
- This was the first in-person annual meeting of the Endocrine Society in three years, and the first time NIEHS displayed its new exhibit. OCPL personnel staffed the booth.
- Trevor Archer, Ph.D., deputy director of NIEHS; Carmen Williams, M.D., Humphrey Yao, Ph.D., Natalie Shaw, M.D., and Francesco DeMayo, Ph.D.,

from the NIEHS Division of Intramural Research; and others form the insitute presented at the conference. NIEHS Clinical Director and former Endocrine Society president Janet Hall, M.D., and NIEHS Scientist Emeritus Kenneth Korach, Ph.D., also attended ENDO2022.

- OCPL also shared conference highlights in the July Environmental Factor.

Public Release of National Academies Sciences Engineering Medicine (NASEM) PFAS Report, July 28.

- NIEHS was pleased to partner with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to support this important study, Guidance on PFAS Testing and Health Outcomes, by the National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine (NASEM).
- NIEHS was glad to see that the NASEM report lines up with many aspects of the institute's current research portfolio on PFAS.
- NIEHS will use the NASEM results to inform our own research priorities moving forward.



II. Public Information and Outreach

The online Environmental Factor is produced monthly by NIEHS OCPL.

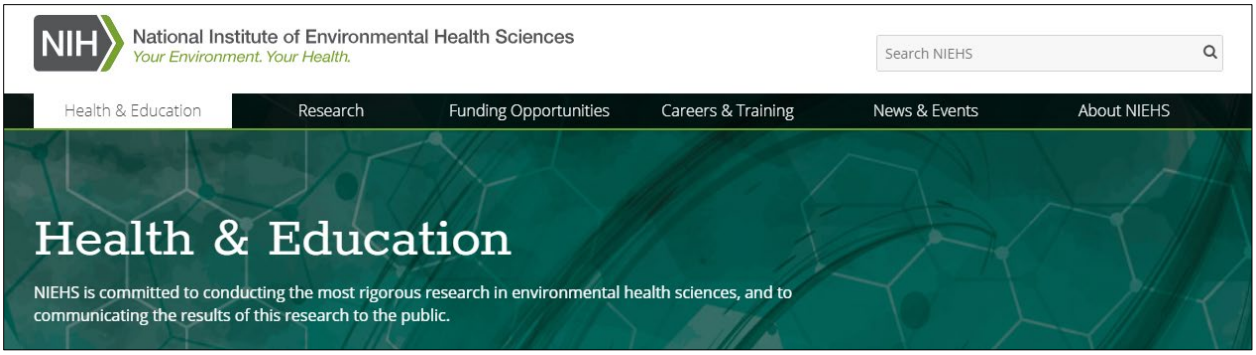
Each month, the Environmental Factor includes a column from Rick Woychik, called the "NIEHS Director's Corner."

- In August, William Suk, Ph.D., and Heather Henry. Ph.D., from the Superfund Research Program joined the NIEHS Director's Corner to talk about emerging technologies to cleanup PFAS contamination and efforts to empower communities.
- In July, Dr. Woychik talked with grantees Julia Brody, Ph.D., from Silent Spring Institute, and Katrina Korfmacher, Ph.D., from the University of Rochester

Medical Center in the NIEHS Director's Corner about reporting back research results to study participants.
- In June, the NIEHS Director's Corner focused on tackling health inequity during a conversation with Shannon Zenk, Ph.D., director of the National Institute of Nursing Research.

Be sure to subscribe to the Environmental Factor newsletter if you haven't already.

Online Environmental Health & Education Information



OCPL maintains more than 60 health topic webpages, which are organized into four categories:

- Conditions & Diseases
- Environmental Agents
- Environmental Health Science Basics
- Population Research

Under Brochures & Fact Sheets, you will find more than 60 publications, all downloadable. You may also order print copies through our online order form. In June, this fact sheet was updated:

- Climate Change and Health

NIEHS Social Media Accounts

OCPL posts social media content daily to promote people, events, and research. We especially like to promote research conducted by our grantees. Remember to mention NIEHS in your news releases and tag us in your social media.

NIEHS OCPL regularly posts content through these platforms:

- Facebook targets a general audience.
- Twitter @NIEHS - targets both a lay audience and science community.
- LinkedIn targets people working in the environmental health field.

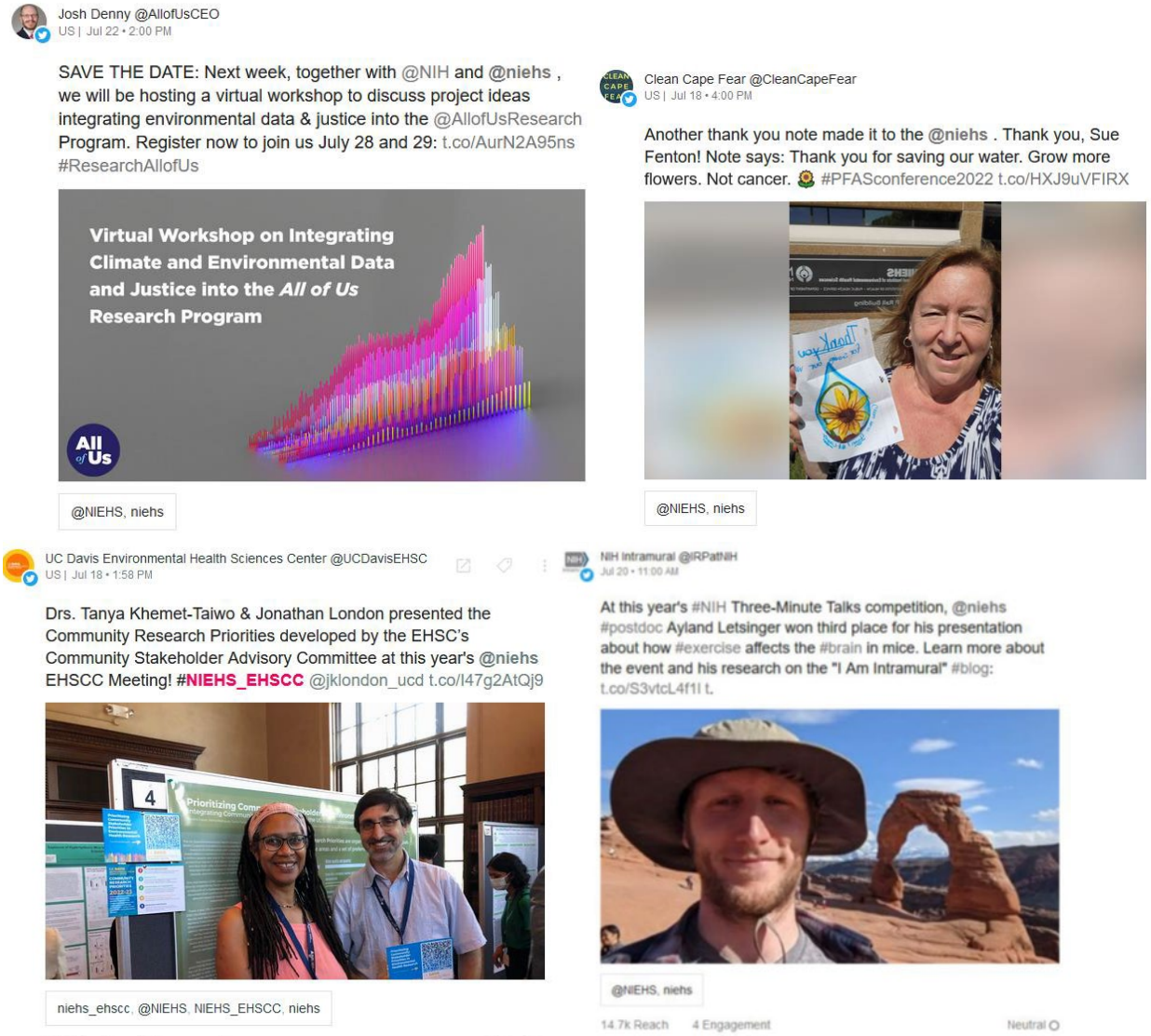
- YouTube targets both a lay audience and science community.

Social Media Growth

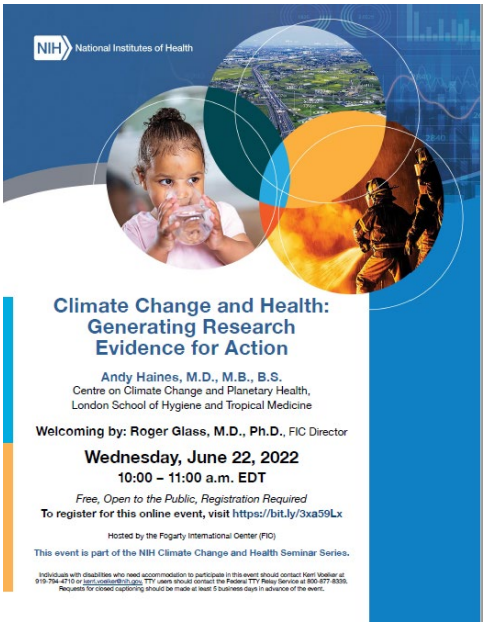
NIEHS social media followership continues to steadily increase. From June 2022 through August 2022, the NIEHS:

- **Twitter** feed increased from 22,323 to 22,706 followers.
- **Facebook** page increased from 33,032 to 33,221 followers.
- **LinkedIn** page increased from 7,188 to 7,733 followers.

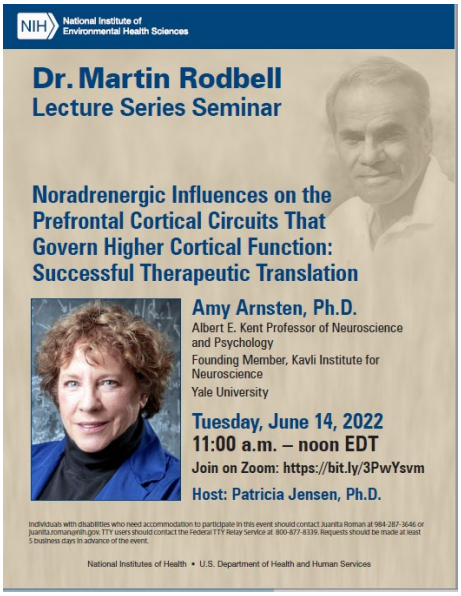
Social Media Examples



OCPL also creates graphics and materials to promote programs and events:



Above, Climate Change and Health Webinar Series and Autism Meeting



Above, Seminar Series and Juneteenth Lecture

Above, recruitment materials for clinical studies

III. News Promotion and Coverage

News Releases from NIH-NIEHS and NIEHS-Funded Researchers

Date	NIH/NIEHS Releases and URL
August 17, 2022	NIEHS: Oil Spill Cleanup Workers More Likely to Have Asthma Symptoms NIH study finds chemicals from Deepwater Horizon disaster associated with more wheeze.
August 5, 2022	NIEHS: NIH First to Develop 3D Structure of Twinkle Protein Sparks new hope for patients with mitochondrial diseases.
July 11, 2022	NIEHS: Preterm Birth More Likely With Exposure to Phthalates NIH study of pregnant women confirms link with chemicals that could put pregnancy at risk.

Date	NIEHS – funded research releases and URL
August 15, 2022	Notre Dame: Early childhood lead exposure, exacerbated by structural racism, results in lower reading scores
August 12, 2022	Duke: Air Pollution and Stress Alter Brains and Social Behavior of Male Mice
August 3, 2022	Columbia: New York City Switch to Clean Buses Cut Air Pollution
July 27, 2022	UC San Diego: Lactating Mice Pass Along Common Antimicrobial to Pups, Initiating Liver Damage
July 20, 2022	University of Kentucky: UK Researchers Develop Antiviral Face Mask

Date	NIEHS – funded research releases and URL
June 30, 2022	University of Pittsburgh Medical Center: Researchers Uncover New Pathway for Accumulation of Age-promoting 'Zombie Cells'
June 29, 2022	University of Southern California: Risk of Death Surges When Extreme Heat and Air Pollution Coincide
June 24, 2022	HHS: HHS Announces Programs to Join President Biden's Justice40 Initiative
June 20, 2022	University of Tennessee Health Science Center: UTHSC Team Receives $2.19 Million to Study Neurotoxicity of Commonly-used Chemical

NIEHS in the News

NIEHS and NTP are often mentioned in a mix of top tier, trade, syndicated, and international news outlets. Examples follow that cover June 2022 – August 2022.

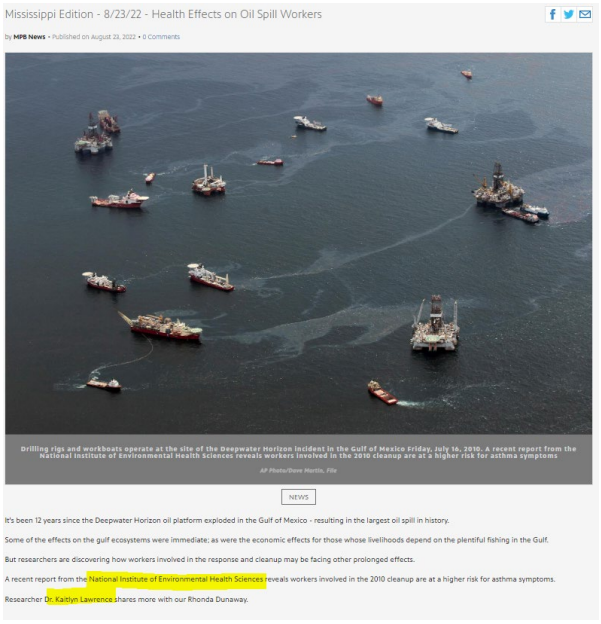
Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
August 23, 2022	Health Effects on Oil Spill Workers	Mississippi Public Broadcasting	https://www.mpbonline.org/blogs/news/mississippi-edition-82322/ **Features Kaitlyn Lawrence of DIR**
August 19, 2022	Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Cleanup Workers Experience Increased Risk for Asthma	Healio	https://www.healio.com/news/allergy-asthma/20220819/deepwater-horizon-oil-spill-cleanup-workers-experience-increased-risk-for-asthma **Features Dale Sandler of DIR**
August 11, 2022	HHS Tool Scores Communities for Cumulative Health Impact Risks	Bloomberg Law	https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/hhs-tool-scores-communities-for-cumulative-health-impact-risks **Highlights DERT's Worker Training Program**

Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
August 8, 2022	NIH Team Creates 3D Structure of Twinkle Protein, Sheds Light on Mitochondrial Diseases	The Science Advisory Board	https://www.scienceboard.net/index.aspx?sec=sup&sub=cell&pag=dis&ItemID=4571 **Includes quotes from DIR researchers including Amanda Riccio and Matthew Longley**
July 28, 2022	Doctors Should Test Levels of PFAS in People at High Risk, Report Says	CNN	https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/28/health/pfas-testing-guidelines-wellness/ **Mentions NIEHS-supported work**
July 27, 2022	Biden Administration Launches Heat.gov, Announces Actions to Lower Electricity CostsAs High Temperatures Hit the U.S.	USA Today	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2022/07/27/biden-administration-launches-heat-gov-explain-impact-heat/10160961002/ **Mentions NIEHS as a partner**
July 26, 2022	A Lawsuit Claims Skittles Are Unfit for Consumption. Experts Weigh In.	The New York Times	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/26/well/eat/skittles-lawsuit-titanium-dioxide.html **NTP is mentioned.**
July 13, 2022	NIH: Common Chemicals Linked to Preterm Births	E&E News: Greenwire	https://www.eenews.net/articles/nih-common-chemicals-linked-to-preterm-births/ **Kelly Ferguson of DIR is quoted**
June 15, 2022	Growing Up in Unsafe Neighborhoods Tied to Poor Sleep in Adults	Medscape	https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/975669 **Symielle Gaston of DIR is quoted**

Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
June 10, 2022	Young girls are going through puberty earlier now than in decades past - and experts say it could be setting them up for lifelong mental health problems and even cancer later in their lives	Daily Mail	https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-10902139/Girls-going-puberty-earlier-setting-lifelong-problems.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490 **Dale Sandler of DIR is quoted**
June 8, 2022	25 years after Karen Wetterhahn died of dimethylmercury poisoning, her influence persists	Chemical and Engineering News	https://cen.acs.org/safety/lab-safety/25-years-Karen-Wetterhahn-died-dimethylmercury-poisoning/100/i21 **William Suk of DERT is quoted**

NIEHS in the News - Select excerpts from news articles

- As a result of an August 17, 2022 press release about the GuLF STUDY, several outlets interviewed NIEHS DIR scientists, including Drs. Dale Sandler and Kaitlyn Lawrence. Dr. Lawrence was on the August 22 edition of Mississippi Public Radio.



Mississippi Edition - 8/23/22 - Health Effects on Oil Spill Workers

by MPB News • Published on August 23, 2022 • 0 Comments

Drilling rigs and workboats operate at the site of the Deepwater Horizon incident in the Gulf of Mexico Friday, July 16, 2010. A recent report from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences reveals workers involved in the 2010 cleanup are at a higher risk for asthma symptoms.

AP Photo/Dave Martin, File

NEWS

It's been 12 years since the Deepwater Horizon oil platform exploded in the Gulf of Mexico - resulting in the largest oil spill in history.

Some of the effects on the gulf ecosystems were immediate; as were the economic effects for those whose livelihoods depend on the plentiful fishing in the Gulf.

But researchers are discovering how workers involved in the response and cleanup may be facing other prolonged effects.

A recent report from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences reveals workers involved in the 2010 cleanup are at a higher risk for asthma symptoms.

Researcher Dr. Kaitlyn Lawrence shares more with our Rhonda Dunaway.

- In August, The **Triangle Business Journal,** highlighted that NIEHS has a new Executive Officer, J'Ingrid Mathis. An **Environmental Factor** Story in July also shared this news.

TRIANGLE BUSINESS JOURNAL

New NIEHS Ed: J'ingrid Mathis Was Named to the Leadership Team at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)

By Cameron Snipes

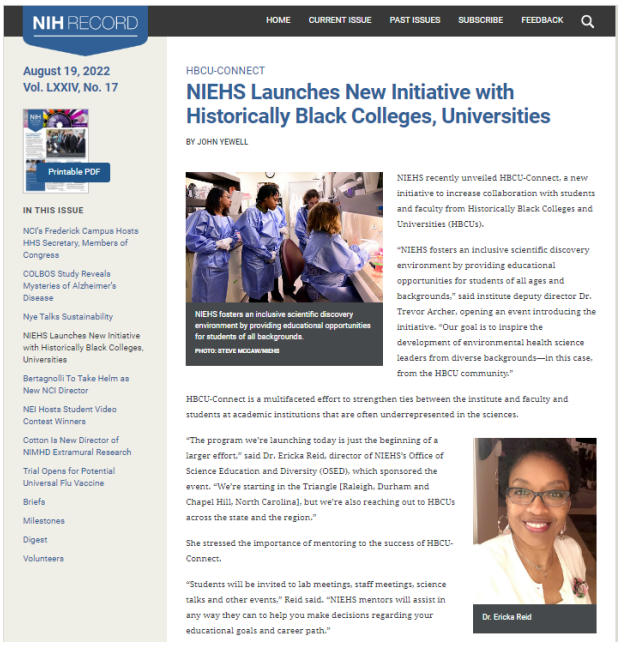
August 15, 2022

In her new role as executive director and associate director for management at the federal health research agency in Research Triangle Park, Mathis will advise on all management issues for the $925 million institute and help oversee the activities of NIEHS' approximately 1,600 federal employees, trainees and contractors. Her appointment was effective in July.

Before coming to NIEHS in 2015 to serve as the chief of operations of the inhouse laboratories, she served as senior advisor and senior program analyst at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Durham.

Source: https://www.bizjournals.com/triangle/news/2022/08/15/tbj-plus-iconic-carolina-beach-bar-for-sale.html

- The **NIH Record** in August, highlights NIEHS HBCU-Connect program.



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NEI Hosts Student Video Contest Winners
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HBCU-CONNECT

NIEHS Launches New Initiative with Historically Black Colleges, Universities

BY JOHN YEWELL

NIEHS fosters an inclusive scientific discovery environment by providing educational opportunities for students of all backgrounds.
PHOTO: STEVE MCCAW/NIEHS

NIEHS recently unveiled HBCU-Connect, a new initiative to increase collaboration with students and faculty from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

"NIEHS fosters an inclusive scientific discovery environment by providing educational opportunities for students of all ages and backgrounds," said institute deputy director Dr. Trevor Archer, opening an event introducing the initiative. "Our goal is to inspire the development of environmental health science leaders from diverse backgrounds—in this case, from the HBCU community."

HBCU-Connect is a multifaceted effort to strengthen ties between the institute and faculty and students at academic institutions that are often underrepresented in the sciences.

"The program we're launching today is just the beginning of a larger effort," said Dr. Ericka Reid, director of NIEHS's Office of Science Education and Diversity (OSED), which sponsored the event. "We're starting in the Triangle [Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina], but we're also reaching out to HBCUs across the state and the region."

Dr. Ericka Reid

She stressed the importance of mentoring to the success of HBCU-Connect.

"Students will be invited to lab meetings, staff meetings, science talks and other events," Reid said. "NIEHS mentors will assist in any way they can to help you make decisions regarding your educational goals and career path."

- **The NIH Clinical Center News summer issue** featured Lisa Rider, M.D., NIEHS Clinical Research Branch, in a story on NIH Rare Disease Day and partnership with Cure JM Foundation. Dr. Rider was also quoted in a **Healio** story, Disease flares requiring therapy change 'relatively uncommon' after COVID-19 vaccination.

- In August**, NIH News in Health** developed a feature, "Probing Personal Care Products." Alexander White. Ph.D. and Nicole Kleinstreuer, Ph.D. of DIR, and grantee Ami Zota are quoted in the story that appeared online August 1.

- In July, the NIH **I AM Intramural Blog** featured Smooth-Talking Scientists who won the Three-Minute Talks competition. Ayland Letsinger, Ph.D. of NIEHS DIR was a winner.

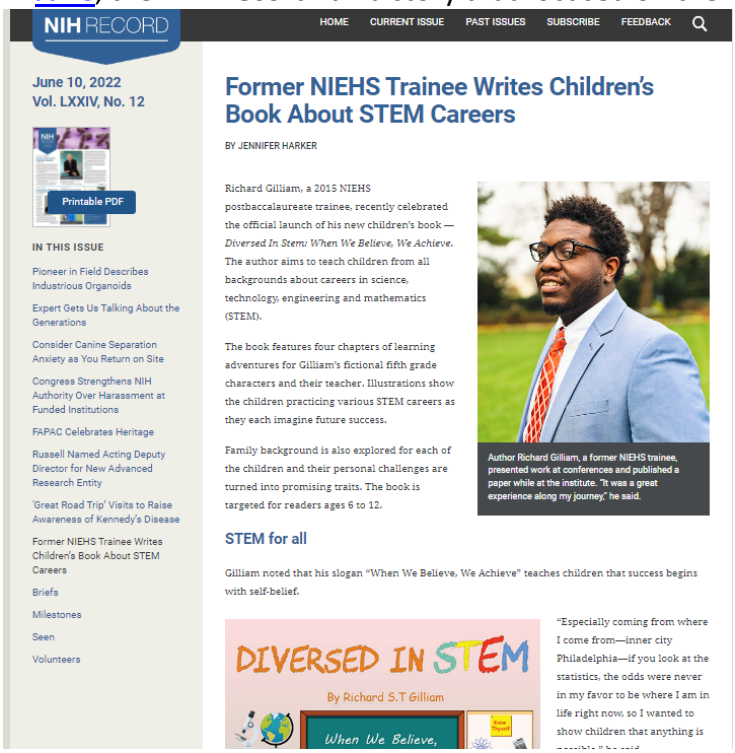
Rounding out the competition's top three was National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) postdoctoral fellow Ayland Letsinger, Ph.D., whose third-place talk focused on his examination of how running on a wheel affects reward-related brain regions in mice. Ninety-five percent of American adults believe that being physically inactive is bad for their health, yet the same proportion of U.S. adults get less than 30 minutes of physical activity per day. By examining how wheel-running affects levels of a reward-related brain chemical called dopamine in mice, Ayland hopes to better understand the rewarding aspects of being active and contribute to the development of interventions that increase people's motivation to exercise.

"Once I have an idea how the brain forms positive and negative associations with physical activity and how things in our environment like overeating or exposure to toxicants disrupt those signals, that information can be used to help people make better decisions, enforce policy, and even use nutrients or pharmaceuticals to improve participation," Ayland explains.

TmT third-place winner Dr. Ayland Letsinger

Through programs like the TmT competition, NIH and other research institutions are increasingly emphasizing the importance of training scientists to communicate about science in an accessible way. With any luck, such efforts will help more and more researchers descend from the ivory tower to educate their friends, family, and the general public about the critical work they do.

- In June, the **NIH Record** ran a story that focused on the NIEHS trainee program.



NIH RECORD

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Former NIEHS Trainee Writes Children's Book About STEM Careers

BY JENNIFER HARKER

Richard Gilliam, a 2015 NIEHS postbaccalaureate trainee, recently celebrated the official launch of his new children's book — *Diversed In Stem: When We Believe, We Achieve*. The author aims to teach children from all backgrounds about careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

The book features four chapters of learning adventures for Gilliam's fictional fifth grade characters and their teacher. Illustrations show the children practicing various STEM careers as they each imagine future success.

Family background is also explored for each of the children and their personal challenges are turned into promising traits. The book is targeted for readers ages 6 to 12.

Author Richard Gilliam, a former NIEHS trainee, presented work at conferences and published a paper while at the institute. "It was a great experience along my journey," he said.

STEM for all

Gilliam noted that his slogan "When We Believe, We Achieve" teaches children that success begins with self-belief.

DIVERSED IN STEM
By Richard S.T Gilliam
When We Believe,

"Especially coming from where I come from—inner city Philadelphia—if you look at the statistics, the odds were never in my favor to be where I am in life right now, so I wanted to show children that anything is