

National Advisory Environmental Health Sciences Council
NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL) Report

February 2023

The NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison ([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 the media, the public, Congress, local governments, public health officials, and communities throughout the world. Christine Flowers directs OCPL.

This report reflects OCPL highlights since the [September 2022 Council Report](#).

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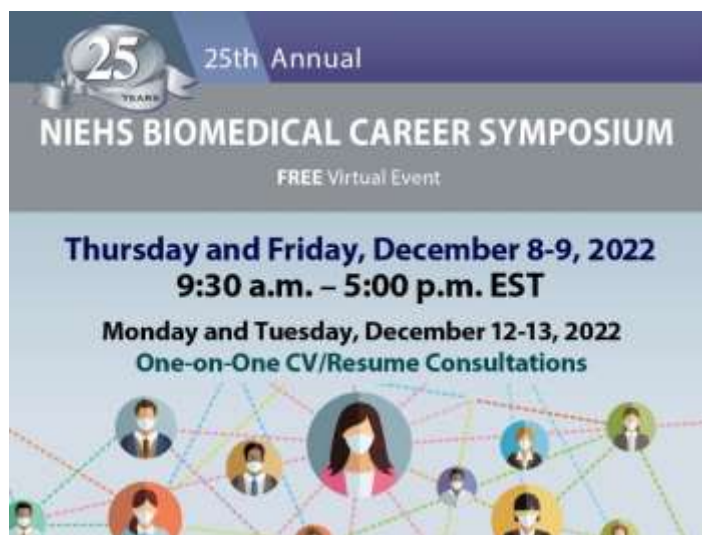
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I. Events

NIEHS Biomedical Career Symposium in December

OCPL developed the promotional materials for the 25th annual symposium held in December and provided the audio-visual support to host this free virtual event, which spanned two days.

OCPL also developed a [story](#) about the well-attended symposium for the January issue of the Environmental Factor.



Explore the Exposome: The Next Frontier of Individualizing Medicine Conference at Mayo Clinic

In November, NIEHS Director Woychik and other NIEHS leaders and grantees joined with scientists from around the globe in Rochester, Minnesota, to explore how the exposome can advance human health on a personalized level.

OCPL developed a [story](#) for the December issue of the Environmental Factor.



2022 National Native American Heritage Month in November

NIEHS worked closely with the NIH Tribal Health Research Office (THRO) and others across NIH to celebrate Native American Heritage Month. This commemorative month provides a special opportunity for NIH to highlight American Indian and Alaska Native culture, ingenuity, and contributions to biomedical research.

- NIEHS was proud to be a partner in supporting the Native American Heritage Month guest lecture on November 16. The event featured NIEHS-funded environmental health research in Alaska. Co-presenters for the lecture were NIEHS grantees Pamela Miller and Viola “Vi” Waghiyi, of the Alaska Community Action on Toxics. They presented “Protecting the Health of Future Generations Through Community-Based Research and Actions: Working in Partnership with the Tribes of Sivuqaq, Alaska.”
- NIEHS Director Woychik joined Lawrence Tabak, DDS, who is performing the duties of the NIH director, and THRO Director David Wilson, Ph.D. as part of the lecture.
- NIEHS developed a story on the lecture for the Environmental Factor, [On remote Alaskan island, community-based research empowers residents](#)



American Public Health Association (APHA) Conference in Boston – NIEHS Exhibit

In October, NIEHS OCPL staff exhibited and attended the APHA event in Boston, November 6-9, 2022. More than 12,500 people attended the 150th anniversary of the conference. Numerous NIEHS researchers and grantees made presentations. NIEHS used its social media platforms to convey the excitement of the conference and developed a story for the [Environmental Factor](#).



Women’s Health Awareness Event

On September 17, 2022, NIEHS held a free all-day event, Your Health is Your Job, at North Carolina Central University in Durham, North Carolina. The Women’s Health Awareness event and initiative are led by the NIEHS Clinical Research Unit to:

- Provide evidence-based community interventions to promote wellness, environmental health literacy, and environmental public health
- Increase community health resiliency
- Advance health equity by improving health care access and quality.



The [Scholars Connect Program](#) and [Office of Fellows’ Career Development](#) also participated by providing information about training opportunities at NIEHS.

- The event was [covered](#) in the November issue of the Environmental Factor.
- The next awareness event is planned for [April 15](#) at North Carolina Central University. OPCL is helping to promote the event.

II. Public Information and Outreach

The online [Environmental Factor](#) is produced monthly by NIEHS OCPL and has over 13,000 subscribers.

NIEHS/OCPL Welcomes New Editor-in-Chief for the Environmental Factor

Caroline Stetler joined NIEHS OCPL in January 2023 to serve as the new editor-in-chief of the Environmental Factor. Caroline previously worked in the HHS Office on Women's Health, where she developed written products and approaches for communicating programs, policies, and research. During her career, Stetler has written and edited articles for national magazines and reported on environmental health topics for a nonprofit news organization. She also has provided editorial services to scientists and clinicians at top academic medical centers. Stetler graduated with Honors in English from Wake Forest University and earned her master's degree in Journalism & Public Affairs from American University.



Each month, the Environmental Factor includes a column from Rick Woychik, called the “NIEHS Director’s Corner.”

- In January, [Sharing science with the public: obstacles and opportunities](#). Dr. Woychik spoke with Cathy Wurzer, Minnesota Broadcasting Hall of Fame inductee, about how best to communicate the exposome and precision medicine.
- In December, [Environmental exposures and Parkinson’s disease: connecting the dots](#). Dr. Woychik spoke with Ray Dorsey, M.D., about how air pollution, certain pesticides, and other agents may be contributing to rising rates of the disorder.
- In November, [Science of neurodevelopmental disorders advanced by cutting-edge tech](#). Dr. Woychik spoke with Drs. Dondrae Coble and Jesse Cushman about how machine vision will improve toxicity testing, open door for new discoveries.
- In October, [Autism researcher focuses on maternal diet, prenatal exposures](#). Dr. Woychik spoke with IEHS grantee Kristen Lyall, Sc.D., about the potential for nutrition to modify risk for autism and improve function.
- In September, [Tribal environmental health strengthened by NIEHS-funded scientist and her team](#). Dr. Woychik spoke with Johnnye Lewis, Ph.D., about pollution cleanup, community engagement, effective science communication, and more.



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 January, NIEHS created a new webpage about nutrition: [Nutrition, Health, and Your Environment \(nih.gov\)](#).
- In October, we updated our [NIEHS overview brochure](#).
- Our “Environmental Health A-Z” booklet and two fact sheets on lung health and asthma were translated to Spanish. All are available on the website. More translations are planned for this year.

Lengua Española:

- [El Asma Y Sus Desencadenantes Medioambientales](#)
- [La Salud Pulmonar Y Tu Medioambiente](#)
- [Medio Ambiente Y Salud, De La A La Z](#)

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 September 2022 through January 1, 2023, the NIEHS:

- **Twitter** feed increased from 22,706 followers to 22,891 followers.
- **Facebook** page increased from 33,221 followers to 33,571 followers.
- **LinkedIn** page increased from 7,733 followers to 8,461 followers.

Social Media Examples





Facebook:



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

A few examples from October- December are provided below. These include promotions for both internal and external events.

OLDEN DISTINGUISHED LECTURE
PROMOTING DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE



The Quest for Environmental and Climate Justice



Robert Bullard, Ph.D.
Distinguished Professor, Urban Planning and Environmental Policy; Director, Bullard Center for Environmental and Climate Justice
Texas Southern University

Monday, October 3, 2022
9:00 – 10:00 a.m. EDT



Clustering and Classification Workshop

October 3-4, 2022
8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. EDT

Virtual Event
Preregistration is required.

Superfund Research Program
Wetterhahn Award Lecture

Molecular Placental Responses to Trichloroethylene Exposure Across Experimental Models: An Example of Mechanistic Reproductive Toxicology



Elana Elkin, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Environmental Health
San Diego State University

Thursday, October 6, 2022
12:30 – 1:30 p.m. EDT

Host: Heather Henry, Ph.D., HSRB/DERT

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)

Veterans Day Celebration

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

Thursday, November 10, 2022
1:00 – 2:00 p.m. EST

Join on Zoom or attend in person at Building 101, Rodbell Auditorium
CFC Charities in Attendance



NIEHS Veterans Day Speaker
Bryan Duran
Senior Chief Petty Officer (SW) U.S. Navy, Retired
Hosted by: NIEHS Veterans Day Planning Committee

NIEHS Scholars Connect Program (NSCP) Fall Presentation



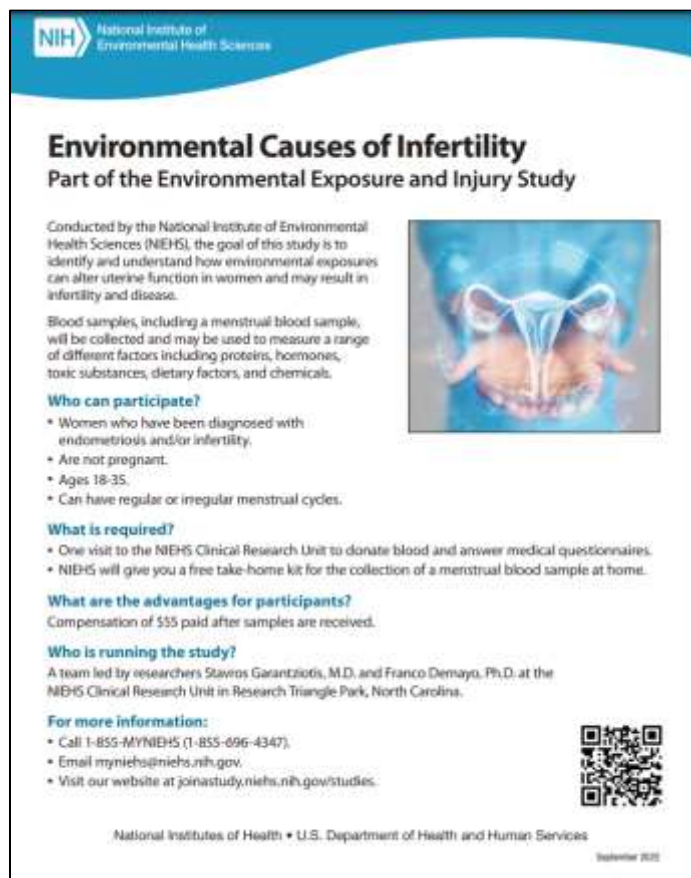
Elevator Pitch:
Overview of Research Work
Answered by NSCP Scholars

Friday, November 18, 2022
3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Announcement of 2022 NIEHS
Fellow of the Year and
Mentor of the Year

Friday, December 16, 2022
3:00 – 3:30 p.m. EST

OCPL also helps develop materials for clinical trial recruitment. Below is an example of a webpage and flyer made in September for the [Environmental Causes of Infertility](#) study.



III. News Promotion and Coverage

News Releases from NIH-NIEHS and NIEHS-Funded Researchers in the NIEHS Newsroom

Date	NIH/NIEHS Releases and URL
November 7, 2022	NIH's Climate and Health Initiative Tackles Global Health Effects Associated With a Changing Climate The authors, a coalition of leaders at NIH, outline how the NIH Climate Change and Health Initiative is uniquely poised to lead and engage with communities and agencies globally to address the health effects associated with climate change.

November 2, 2022	New 3D Model Shows How Cadmium Exposure May Affect Heart Development Researchers have developed a three-dimensional model that shows how exposure to cadmium might lead to congenital heart disease. Affecting nearly 40,000 newborns a year, congenital heart disease is the most common type of birth defect in the United States.
October 17, 2022	Hair Straightening Chemicals Associated With Higher Uterine Cancer Risk Women who used chemical hair straightening products were at higher risk for uterine cancer compared to women who did not report using these products, according to a new study from the National Institutes of Health.
Date	News Releases from NIEHS funded Researchers
January 17, 2023	Researchers Discover Why Only Some People Experience Long-Term Benefits from Peanut Allergy Treatments – Massachusetts General Hospital - Features NIEHS DIR support and collaboration
January 10, 2023	Texas A&M Researchers Developing New Approach for Analyzing Chemical Mixtures – Texas A&M University
December 12, 2022	Public Health Research Team Makes Strides in Studying Impact of Plastic Pollution – College of Charlestown
December 5, 2022	Household Air Cleaners Improve Heart Health Among Individuals with COPD, Researchers Find – Johns Hopkins Medicine
November 7, 2022	PFAS Levels Lower in Buildings With Healthier Furnishings - Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
October 13, 2022	Link Between Commonly Used Chemicals, Gestational Diabetes – Kaiser Permanente
October 3, 2022	Yale Superfund Research Center to Investigate Water Contaminants Linked to Cancer – Yale
September 8, 2022	\$11.3 Million NIH Superfund Award to Address Environmental Health Issues Caused by VOCs – Wayne State

September 6, 2022	Release: NIH Awards \$100 Million for Autism Centers of Excellence Program – NICHD
September 6, 2022	Air Pollution Heightened COVID Risk in Low-Income Pregnant New Yorkers – Columbia Mailman School of Public Health
August 30, 2022	Tiny Antibodies May Provide New Tool to Fight COVID-19 – NCATS

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 **September 2022 – January 2023**. **Selected news articles that featured interviews with NIEHS staff.**

Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
January 19, 2023	The impacts of climate change on our health — from our bodies to our cells	Minnesota Public Radio – Climate Cast	https://www.mprnews.org/episode/2023/01/19/the-impacts-of-climate-events-on-our-health-from-our-bodies-to-our-cells This is a 5-minute podcast that features Drs. Woychik (NIEHS/NTP Director) and Collman as guests talking about the NIH Climate Change and Health Initiative.
January 10, 2023	Best Jobs: Epidemiologist/Medical Scientist	US News and World Report	https://money.usnews.com/careers/best-jobs/epidemiologist Features quotes from Dale Sandler of DIR, Chief of epidemiology branch

Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
December 12, 2022	Changing the Climate at NIH	Research Professional News	https://www.researchprofessionalnews.com/rr-news-usa-2022-12-changing-the-climate-at-nih/ Features quotes from NIEHS Director and Gwen Collman
December 6, 2022	Efforts Now Underway to Operationalize Exposomics	Bio-IT World	https://www.bio-itworld.com/news/2022/12/06/efforts-now-underway-to-operationalize-exposomics Features quotes from NIEHS Director
November 25, 2022	Daylight Saving Time Sheds Light on Lack of Sleep's Disproportionate Impact in Communities of Color	CNN Health	https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/25/health/racial-inequities-sleep/index.html Features quotes from Chandra Jackson of DIR
November 15, 2022	Antinuclear Antibodies on the Rise in U.S.	MedPage Today	https://www.medpagetoday.com/reading-room/acrr/generalrheumatology/101746 Features Work by DIR, and includes quotes from NIEHS emeritus Fred Miller
November 10, 2022	How the FCC Shields Cellphone Companies from Safety Concerns	ProPublica	https://www.propublica.org/article/fcc-5g-wireless-safety-cellphones-risk Features studies supported by the NTP.

Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
November 8, 2022	NIH Takes on Health Toll of Climate Change	E&E News: Greenwire	https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/eenews/2022/11/08/nih-takes-on-health-toll-of-climate-change-00065530 Features Quotes from NIEHS Director
The bulk of the media attention for 2022 come from DIR Alexandra White's researcher paper and the press release on hair straighteners and uterine cancer risk published on October 17, which had high media interest. OCPL interacted with more than 60 media outlets that month. This includes preparing Dr. White to be on the Today Show, NPR, Washington Post, NYT, and other high-profile, esteemed news organizations. The release resulted in more than 1,000 national and international news stories. Selective samples in gray include:			
November 2, 2022	There's A Lot in the News About Hair Relaxers and Uterine Cancer: How Worried Should We Be?	Allure Magazine	https://www.allure.com/story/hair-relaxers-risk-uterine-cancer
October 28, 2022	To Straighten or Not to Straighten: The Difficult Decision That Black Women Face When It Comes to Their Hair	Forbes	https://www.forbes.com/sites/janinegassam/2022/10/28/to-straighten-or-not-to-straighten-the-difficult-decision-that-black-women-face-when-it-comes-to-their-hair/?sh=e535945641f4
October 23, 2022	Researchers Have Found a Link Between Chemical Straighteners and Uterine Cancer	National Public Radio	https://www.npr.org/2022/10/23/1130782429/researchers-have-found-a-link-between-chemical-straighteners-and-uterine-cancer 5-minute listen



Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
October 19, 2022	Hair-straightening Chemicals Linked with Higher Risk for Uterine Cancer	HuffPost	https://www.huffpost.com/entry/chemical-hair-products-cancer-l-63500ffae4b08e0e6089dd1a
October 19, 2022	How Often Chemical Straighteners Are Used Is Key to Cancer Link	Today Show	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dyLJOCOKMFU
October 18, 2022	What to know about hair straightening chemicals and uterine cancer risk	The Washington Post	https://www.washingtonpost.com/wellness/2022/10/18/chemical-hair-straighten-uterine-cancer/
October 17, 2022	Chemical hair straighteners may cause uterine cancer: study	France 24	https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20221017-chemical-hair-straighteners-may-cause-uterine-cancer-study
October 17, 2022	Hair Straighteners May Pose a Small Risk for Uterine Cancer, Study Finds	The New York Times	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/17/health/hair-straighteners-black-women-cancer.html
October 6, 2022	Move to Zero-emission Trucks Could Save 66,000 U.S. Lives	Health Day	https://consumer.healthday.com/10-6-move-to-zero-emission-trucks-could-save-66000-u-s-lives-2658383328.html Includes quotes from NIEHS Grantees and refers readers to NIEHS as a resource.

Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
September 21, 2022	Fact Check: Alzheimer's, Dementia Patients Do NOT 'ALWAYS Have High Levels of Aluminum'	Fact Check	https://leadstories.com/hoax-alert/2022/09/fact-check-alzheimers-dementia-patients-do-not-always-have-high-levels-of-aluminum.html NIEHS is listed as a source for fact checking misinformation
September 21, 2022 August 15, 2022	J'Ingrid Mathis was named executive director and associate director for management of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences facility in Research Triangle Park	Durham Magazine Triangle Business Journal	https://issuu.com/shannonmedia/docs/dmon22_issuu/110 NIEHS new executive officer is featured in both publications
September 18, 2022	How Duke researchers are using a \$10M machine to advance science, vaccine development	WRAL TechWire	https://wraltechwire.com/2022/09/18/how-duke-researchers-are-using-a-10m-machine-to-advance-science-vaccine-development/ NIEHS Cryo-EM is featured
September 12, 2022	Johnson & Johnson and a New War on Consumer Protection	The New Yorker	https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/09/19/johnson-johnson-and-a-new-war-on-consumer-protection NIEHS/NTP research is discussed in this lengthy piece.

Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
September 7, 2022	WaterWorld	Something in the Wastewater	https://www.waterworld.com/wastewater/treatment/article/14281682/something-in-the-wastewater Features work of NIEHS grantees and quotes from Danielle Carlin of DERT
August 19, 2022	Deepwater Horizon oil spill cleanup workers experience increased risk for asthma	Healio	https://www.waterworld.com/wastewater/treatment/article/14281682/something-in-the-wastewater Features quotes from Dale Sandler of DIR.
August 23, 2022	Health Effects on Oil Spill Workers	Mississippi Public Broadcasting	https://www.mpbonline.org/blog/news/mississippi-edition-82322/ Features Kaitlyn Lawrence of DIR

Additionally, OCPL helped develop two stories for the **NIH Catalyst**, an NIH publication about intramural research, that appeared in the January-February 2023 issue.

- [Harnessing Exposome Data to Predict Disease: NIEHS Researchers Identify Environmental Exposures Associated with Type 2 Diabetes](#)
- [NIEHS: New Tools Reveal How Cadmium Exposure Affects Heart Development](#)



OCPL staff also contributed to several stories that appeared in the January issue of **NIH Medline Plus Magazine**, [Precision Environmental Health's role in preventing disease](#) and [The Future of Water: Why PFAS are harmful and how to avoid them](#).

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