

National Advisory Environmental Health Sciences Council

NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL) Report

June 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 [February 2023 Council Report](#).

Contents

I. Events

II. Public Information and Outreach

- Environmental Factor (the NIEHS online newsletter)
- Environmental Health Information, Online and Print
- Social Media
- Promotional Materials

III. News Coverage

- Press Releases
- News Highlights

I. Events

NIH Climate Change and Health Initiative. OCPL continues to provide strategic communications support for this NIH-wide program. The NIEHS director leads the Initiative as chair of the Executive Committee, which is comprised of seven NIH Institute or Center directors. OCPL develops content and maintains the [NIH Climate Change and Health](#) web pages. Since last Council report, the Initiative has

- Promoted the Climate and Health Scholars program and [seminars](#).
- OCPL updated webpages with two funding opportunities ([P20](#) and [Administrative Supplements](#)) in early March.
- Communicated about the awards to establish the Alliance for Community Engagement on Climate and Health ([ACE-CH](#)). Also developed an [Environmental Factor story](#) on the awards in April.



Women's Health Awareness Day Promotion. OCPL worked closely with the NIEHS Office of Human Research and Community Engagement to develop materials for and to promote the 9th Annual Women's Health Awareness Conference, held April 15, for women in North Carolina. A program book was developed, as well as materials, to support activities at the North Carolina Central University event in Durham and at two satellite events.



- A May Environmental Factor story, [NIEHS Women's Health Awareness event strengthens NC Communities](#), highlights the many activities including information on environmental justice, mental health, breast cancer and more at the annual event.

Society of Toxicology (SOT) Annual Conference in Nashville - March 18-23. More than 5,000 people attended the 62nd annual event. Dori Germolec, Ph.D., of the Division of Translational Toxicology (DTT), began serving as SOT president in May, and Cynthia Rider, Ph.D., also of NIEHS DTT, began serving as vice president-elect.

For this meeting, OCPL:

- Set up and staffed the NIEHS exhibit.
- Developed a [program planner](#) of all NIEHS, NTP, EHP activities at the conference and added information to websites.
- Developed promotional materials for three special sessions: Meet the Directors, ICCVAM Roadmap Progress, and NTP/DTT Outlook.
- Supported NIEHS DERT staff that were meeting with potential grant applicants in a dedicated funding room.
- Wrote and published an Environmental Factor [story in April](#) highlighting NIEHS activities at the conference.



American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI) [annual meeting](#), Feb. 22-27, in San Antonio. OCPL attended the meeting and staffed the NIEHS exhibit. OCPL shared job opportunities with early-career scientists, gathered pictures for social media, and attended sessions featuring institute scientists and grantees. An Environmental Factor story, [Allergy, asthma, and immunology researchers gather in San Antonio](#), highlights NIEHS activities.



World Asthma Day. To showcase NIEHS efforts related to asthma research, NIEHS joined with NHLBI and NIAID to issue a statement from NIH that highlighted important research to better understand, prevent, and treat asthma. The statement was published as a [press release](#) by all three institutes with associated social media activities.



II. Public Information and Outreach

The online [Environmental Factor](#) is produced monthly by NIEHS OCPL and has nearly 14,000 subscribers.



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

- In May, [Autism’s gene-environment influences studied by early career scientist](#). During Autism Awareness Month, Dr. Woychik spoke with postdoctoral fellow Katie Eyring, Ph.D., from UCLA, about the complex origins of this condition.



- Also in May, OCPL developed a [story](#) in the Environmental Factor highlighting the selection of **David Balshaw as the director for the Division of Extramural Research and Training (DERT)**.
- The Factor also started [Funding Facts](#), a new monthly feature developed in collaboration with the DERT. The newsletter feature aims to highlight institutional research priorities and help improve applicant responsiveness to funding announcement criteria.
- **In April**, the Director's Corner article — an [interview with NIEHS grantee Irfan Rahman on e-cigarette toxicity](#) — was the most-read story from the April issue [769 views].
 - Also In April, to commemorate with SOT, the Factor had a toxicology-themed story package. The package included stories about the [Society of Toxicology conference](#) and [NIEHS-supported scientists receiving awards](#), as well as two Scientific Journeys pieces featuring [Dori Germolec, Ph.D.](#), and [David Reif, Ph.D.](#)
- **In March**, Dr. Woychik spoke with Nicole Kleinstreuer, Ph.D., of DTT, [about how new approach methodologies can strengthen biomedical research](#).
- **In February**, [Precision nutrition improves health at individual level](#) was the topic Dr. Woychik discussed with Susan Sumner, Ph.D., with the Nutrition Research Institute.

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](#).

- **New Fact Sheets.** OCPL updated or developed several new fact sheets.
 - [Endocrine Disruptors and Your Health](#)
 - [Occupational Health: Why the Environment Matters](#)
 - [Flame Retardants and Your Health](#)
 - [Cellphone Radio Frequency Radiation Studies](#)
- **Updated Health Topics.** OCPL updated the following health topics webpages:
 - [Asthma](#) (to coordinate with World Asthma Day news release)
 - [Smoking and Vaping](#)
 - [Weather Extremes](#)
- **Spanish Translation.** OCPL also oversaw the Spanish translation and website posting of [Nutrición, Salud y Medio Ambiente](#) (Nutrition, Health, and Your Environment) and [La equidad en salud progresó con la retroalimentación a grupos poblacionales diversos](#), a newsletter story about a Spanish-language app used by researchers in Puerto Rico.

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 February 2023 through May 23, 2023, the NIEHS:

- Twitter feed increased from 22,891 followers to 23,314 followers.
- Facebook page increased from 33,571 followers to 33,722 followers.
- LinkedIn page increased from 8, 461 followers to 9,359 followers.

OCPL created several videos to increase NIEHS visibility on social media. NIEHS has seen a noticeable uptick in social media visibility during that same time period via our video views:

- Twitter: 2.1k views
- Facebook: 4.4k views
- LinkedIn: 3.6k views

Social Media Examples



Public Service Recognition Week (below)



Facebook:

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences April 22 · 🌐

DYK things in your environment — such as the soil which grows your food, the water you drink, and the air you breathe — can affect your health?

Since 1965, NIEHS scientists have worked to understand everything "from A to Z" about the environment's role in causing illness and disease. This includes research into things like asthma and autoimmune disease as well as other studies that explore the connection between human health and our planet's changing climate. You can read ... See more



8

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences April 19 · 🌐

Congratulations to David Balshaw, Ph.D., on becoming the next director of the NIEHS Division of Extramural Research and Training (DERT).

"The DERT director position requires scientific excellence and energy, enthusiasm, and innovative thinking that is necessary to lead a multitiered and diverse organization," said NIEHS Director Rick Woychik, Ph.D. "Throughout his 20-year career with the NIEHS, Dr. Balshaw has proven his ability to manage substantial financial resources, o... See more



13

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences May 15 at 9:58 AM · 🌐

Looking for the latest environmental health research from NIEHS scientists? Check out the Intramural Papers of the Month for May! <https://bit.ly/3O2gqYn>



National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences May 8 at 1:53 PM · 🌐

To kick-off Public Service Recognition Week (#PSRW), #NIH is honoring federal employees for the work they do in promoting and protecting the health of all Americans.

At NIEHS, we are #Proud2ServeUSA!

Our Director, Rick Woychik, Ph.D., shares why he serves:



14

Linked In:

Posted by NIEHS Communications • 5/12/2023



Posted by NIEHS Communications • 4/12/2023



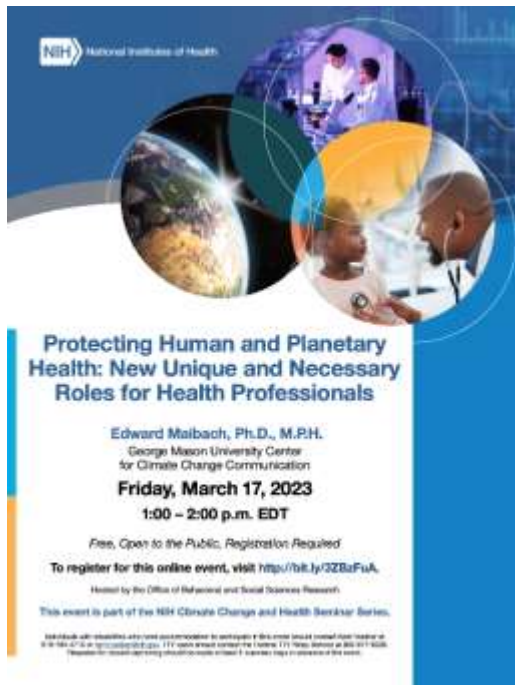
OCPL also creates graphics and materials to promote programs and events:

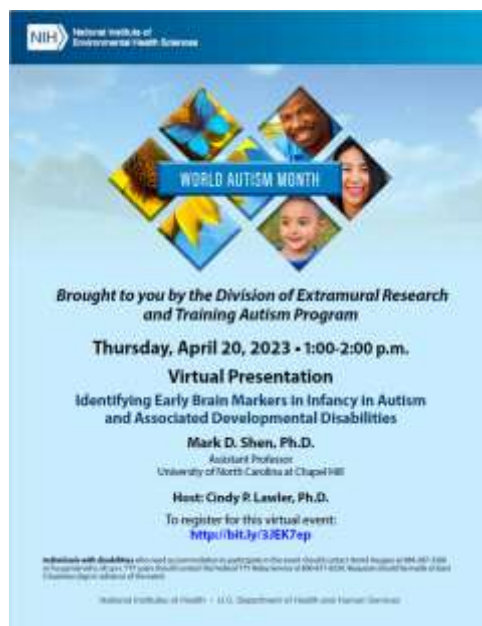
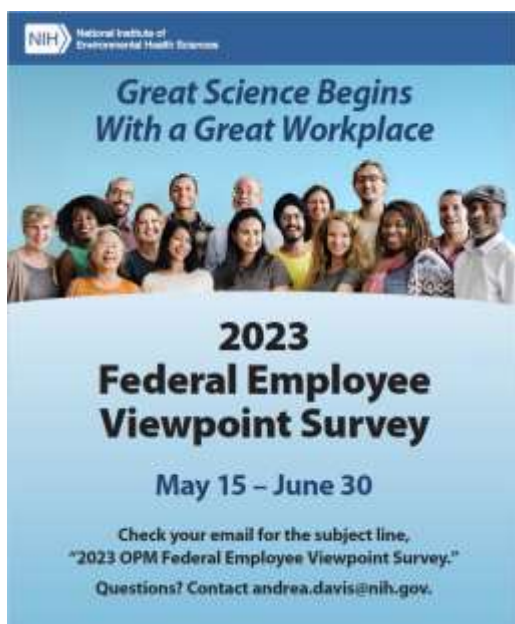
A few examples from February-June are provided below. These include promotions for both internal and external events.

- OCPL updated the **NIEHS Senior Leadership Team board** in the main NIEHS building in May, to include our new DERT director and the newly selected Acting Scientific Director for the Division of Translational Toxicology.



Additional examples of OCPL design work:





OCPL also helps develop materials for **clinical trial recruitment**. Visit [Join a NIEHS Study](#). Below is an example of the type of recruitment flyers OCPL helps develop. This one was developed in May to recruit girls 8-14 years old into the study.

Demystifying a Girl's First Period

Help your daughters prepare for puberty by enrolling them in a new study called A Girl's First Period — Why Is It So Unpredictable?

Who can participate?

- Girls 8-14 years old.
- Have some breast development.

What is required?

- Parents or guardians must consent for the study, and a parent or guardian must be present at all study visits.
- An initial screening visit at the Clinical Research Unit, with occasional visits every six months.
- Finger prick and urine tests to measure hormones.
- Ultrasounds of the abdomen to look at the ovaries and uterus.

What are the advantages for participants?

- Quick and easy tracking of menstrual cycles.
- Educational materials.
- Health assessment and consultation with a female pediatrician.
- Compensation for participants after completing each set of visits.

Who is running the study?

- A team, led by pediatrician and hormone specialist Natalie Shaw, M.D., at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Clinical Research Unit in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

For information about this study, parents may:

- Call 1-855-MYNIEHS (1-855-696-4347).
- Email myniehs@niehs.nih.gov.
- Visit <https://niehs.nih.gov/firstperiod>.




May 2023

III. News Promotion and Coverage

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

Date	NIH/NIEHS Releases and URL
May 11, 2023	NIH launches \$140 million effort to investigate genetic variation in normal human cells and tissues NIEHS is part of this Common Fund Program which will accelerate research on human development, aging, and disease.
May 2, 2023	NIH Statement on World Asthma Day 2023 National Institutes of Health scientists and grant recipients conduct innovative research to better understand, prevent, and treat asthma.
February 17, 2023	Toxic Protein Linked to Muscular Dystrophy and Arhinia Researchers at the National Institutes of Health and their colleagues have found that a toxic protein made by the body called DUX4 may be the cause of two very different rare genetic disorders.
Date	News Releases from NIEHS funded Researchers
April 19, 2023	University of Rhode Island researcher contributes to study confirming link between PFAS – ‘forever chemicals’ — in drinking water and weight gain Grantee Phillippe Grandjean leads a study that confirms a direct link between certain chemicals in drinking water and human obesity – specifically that increased PFAS content in blood promotes weight gain and makes it harder to keep a lower body weight after weight loss.
April 5, 2023	Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health: Air pollution may increase risk for dementia Meta-analysis strengthens prior evidence of link between air pollutants, particularly PM2.5, and clinical dementia

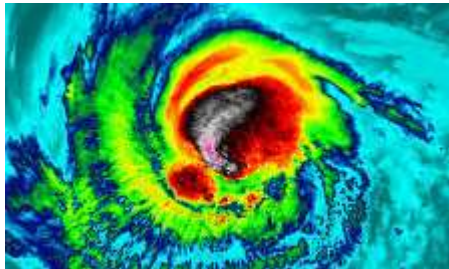
March 21, 2023	<u>Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution Helps Lead Groundbreaking Study on the Human and Ocean Health Impacts of Ocean Plastics</u> For the first time, leading researchers from the fields of healthcare, ocean science, and social science have collaborated to quantify plastic's considerable risks to all life on Earth.
March 8, 2023	<u>New Study: Abatacept Therapy Offers Promising Results Treating Juvenile Dermatomyositis</u> Juvenile dermatomyositis, a rare but often severe and chronic systemic autoimmune disease, includes a large number of patients who are treatment resistant, requiring long term immunosuppressive therapy. DIR researcher Lisa Rider is quoted in this GW release.
February 21, 2023	<u>Keck School of Medicine Study Finds “Forever Chemicals” Disrupt Key Biological Processes</u> Exposure to a mixture of chemicals called PFAS leads to alterations in biological processes associated with a broad range of diseases.
February 1, 2023	<u>Apple Women’s Health Study Advances Understanding of Menstrual Cycles and Health</u> Over the past three years, researchers with the Apple Women’s Health Study have been able to shed light on topics such as pregnancy attempts during the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of COVID-19 vaccination on menstrual cycles. Thanks to three years of renewed support from Apple, the work will continue.

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 **January 2023 – May 2023**. Selected news articles featured NIEHS or interviews with NIEHS staff.

Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
May 17, 2023	Moving Kids with Asthma to Better Neighborhoods Eases Symptoms	MedPage Today	https://www.medpagetoday.com/allergyimmunology/asthma/104520 NIEHS listed as funder.
May 16, 2023	Black, Hispanic Americans More Likely to Have PFAS Chemicals in Drinking Water	U.S. News & World Report	https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2023-05-16/black-hispanic-americans-more-likely-to-have-pfas-chemicals-in-drinking-water NIEHS listed as funder.
May 12, 2023	Age, Not Aluminum, Is Greatest Risk Factor for Alzheimer's, Dementia	USA Today	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2023/05/12/experts-dispute-attempt-to-link-alzheimers-aluminum-fact-check/70207832007/ Jonathan Hollander of DERT is quoted.
May 5, 2023	TFF and NIEHS partner to develop powder formulations for respiratory diseases	Pharmaceutical Technology	https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/news/tff-niehs-respiratory-diseases/ NIEHS is mentioned. Stavros Garantziotis is quoted in news release related to this story.
May 4, 2023	AI, Machine Learning May Aid in PCOS Detection, Reducing Undiagnosed Burden	Healio	https://www.healio.com/news/womens-health-ob-gyn/20230504/ai-machine-learning-may-aid-in-pcos-detection-reducing-undiagnosed-burden Skand Shekhar of DIR is quoted.

Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
May 4, 2023	Report on Fluoride's Effects on Kids' IQ Nears Finish Line	Bloomberg Law	https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/report-on-fluorides-effects-on-kids-ig-nears-finish-line?context=search&index=0 NTP is mentioned. Trevor Archer is quoted.
May 4, 2023	Where climate meets health	Southern Science	https://southern-science.com/2023/05/04/where-climate-meets-health/ Gwen Collman of OD is mentioned.
May 3, 2023	Precision medicine, environmental health are focus of RTP symposium	WRAL TechWire	https://wraltechwire.com/2023/05/03/precision-medicine-environmental-health-are-focus-of-rtp-symposium/ Alison Motsinger-Reif of DIR and David Reif of DTT are mentioned.
May 1, 2023	Cracking the Code: How physiologists are advancing science in neurodegenerative diseases 	American Physiological Society	https://www.physiology.org/publications/news/the-physiologist-magazine/2023/may/cracking-the-code?SSO=Y Jonathan Hollander of DERT is quoted in this story.
April 10, 2023	Summit Focuses on Societal and Health Impacts of Climate Change	Miami U News	https://news.miami.edu/stories/2023/04/summit-focuses-on-societal-and-health-impacts-of-climate-change.html Gwen Collman of OD is quoted.

Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
April 5, 2023	Cancer and Climate Change: The Health Threats of Unnatural Disasters	Cancer Currents Blog	https://www.cancer.gov/news-events/cancer-currents-blog/2023/cancer-climate-change-impact Gwen Collman of OD is quoted. 
March 29, 2023	How to Win the Mold War 	Prevention Magazine	https://www.prevention.com/health/a42508456/can-mold-make-you-sick/ Lengthy article that features quotes from Dori Germolec of DTT.
March 22, 2023	How to Ease Seasonal Allergy Symptoms	Consumer Reports	https://www.consumerreports.org/health/allergy/how-to-ease-seasonal-allergy-symptoms-a8182165060/ Mentions NIEHS as a source.
March 15, 2023	Fluoride May Harm Kids, But Evidence Varies, Agency Finds	Bloomberg Law	https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/fluoride-may-harm-kids-but-evidence-varies-agency-finds NIEHS Director is quoted.

Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
March 14, 2023	EPA Proposes First Standards to Make Drinking Water Safer From 'Forever Chemicals'	CNN Health	https://www.cnn.com/2023/03/14/health/epa-pfas-standards-wellness NIEHS mentioned in story. 
March 7, 2023	Roundup Cancer Risk Isn't from Active Ingredient, Study Says	Bloomberg Law	https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/roundup-cancer-risk-isnt-from-active-ingredient-study-says?context=search&index=0 NTP/NIEHS quoted in this story.
March 7, 2023	Could the Next Blockbuster Drug Be Lab-Rat Free? Alternatives to animal testing are gaining momentum. 	The New York Times	https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/07/health/drug-animals-testing.html Nicole Kleinstreuer of DTT is quoted.
February 18, 2023	Florida workers got sick after Deepwater Horizon oil spill. They want BP to pay.	Tampa Bay Times	https://www.tampabay.com/news/health/2023/02/17/deepwater-horizon-bp-oil-spill-sick-workers-lawsuits/ Dale Sandler of DIR is quoted extensively in this story.

Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
February 15, 2023	Many Personal Care Products Contain Harmful Chemicals. Here's What to Do About It.	New York Times	https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/15/well/live/personal-care-products-chemicals.html NIEHS is mentioned in this story.
February 1, 2023	Hair care alternatives for women worried about cancer risks tied to straightening products	WKYC Studios	https://www.wkyc.com/article/news/health/hair-care-alternatives-for-women-worried-about-cancer-risks/95-f96c5a38-94ae-4463-b088-f8c579f075de Alexandria White of DIR is quoted in this story.
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 5-minute podcast features Drs. Woychik (NIEHS/NTP Director) and Collman as guests talking about the NIH Climate Change and Health Initiative.

Additionally, OCPL helped develop a story for the [NIH Catalyst](#), an NIH publication about intramural research, that appeared in the May-June 2023 issue.

- [NIEHS: Toxic Protein that Causes a Rare Muscular Dystrophy also Kills the Precursors of the Human Nose](#)

OCPL also worked to get several stories in the [NIH Record](#), to let others at NIH know about NIEHS research and activities. Examples include:

- March 17: [‘Bring a Different Conversation to Science’](#)
- March 3: [NIH Welcomes Inaugural Class of Climate and Health Scholars](#)
- March 3: [10 NIHer’s Among Newly Elected AAAS Fellows](#)
- Feb 3: [NIEHS Influences National Effort to Solve PFAS Problems](#)

###