National Advisory Environmental Health Sciences Council

NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL) Report

February 2024

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 2023 Council Report.

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I. Events

NIEHS Superfund Research Program (SRP) annual meeting, December 4-6 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. SRP-funded researchers and trainees — representing 70 institutions across the U.S. — joined NIEHS staff, including the NIEHS director, community partners, and Tribal leaders to discuss research advances related to heavy metals, ubiquitous chemicals called PFAS, prenatal exposures, and more.

A January 2024 Factor story, Collaboration and training key to Superfund success, provides highlights from the meeting.

Former NCI Director gives lecture at NIEHS in November. Norman Sharpless, M.D., who led the National Cancer Institute at NIH from 2017-2022, discussed therapy advances and what it will take to cut the cancer death rate in half by 2047 as part of the NIEHS Distinguished Lecture Series.

Read more and watch a video from the meeting in the December 2023 issue of the Environmental Factor, Distinguished Lecturer shares trick or protecting Bone Marrow.

Veterans Day Celebration. NIEHS staff gathered in person and virtually to recognize and thank Veterans across the country and those at NIEHS for their service to our country. NIEHS Director Woychik, a former U.S. Navy veteran, provided opening remarks.

Read more in the December issue of the Factor about this event and the kick-off of the annual Combined Federal Campaign. At the end of the campaign, NIEHS had raised over $100,000.

"All of Us" tour bus at NIEHS. In mid-October, Journey, the NIH All of Us Research Program bus, stopped at NIEHS as part of its nationwide tour. More than 300 NIEHS staff members visited the bus, with more than 50 enrolling in the program while on site.

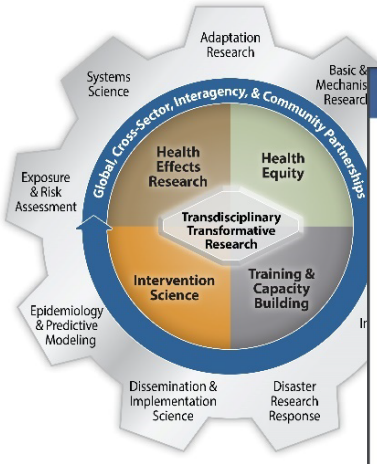
Read about the "All of Us" tour bus stops at NIEHS in the December issue of the Environmental Factor.

Sister Study 20th Anniversary. OCPL worked with the lead researchers of the Sister Study to launch promotional activities commemorating the 20th anniversary of this breast cancer and health study. Many new products were developed and highlighted throughout October, which also marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Some of the many products developed are listed below, in addition to a partnership with NIH Medline Plus Magazine to develop consumer friendly products:

- **A 30-second promotional video and a ten-minute video about the study.** Worked with staff to get teaser and full length videos on You Tube, along with a Spanish-captioned version. These were also made available on the Sister Study website and on NIEHS public and internal sites, including a featured video of the month.
- **Factor story.** Developed a story with photos and captions for the October issue of the Factor about Dale Sandler presenting the prestigious Mider lecture at NIH.
- **The NIH Catalyst** also developed a story about the Mider lecture in their November-December issue. "Dale Sandler on Risk Factors for Breast Cancer."
- **Anniversary research highlights.** OCPL took a lead role in helping develop the research highlights for the Sister Study site.
- **Media advisory was issued on October 2**. Sister Study Turns 20.
- **Updated NIEHS fact sheet on breast cancer and webpage health topic.**
- **NIH Medline Plus Magazine: Voices of the Sister Study.** Recruiters and participants explain why this national breast cancer study matters.
- **NIH Medline Plus Magazine: Infographic on Who are the "Sisters"?**

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 the last council report, OCPL worked to support the initiative:

- In October, announced the new 2024 class of seven NIH Climate and Health Scholars. We also wrote an Environmental Factor story about them in December.



- Also in October, updated the fact sheet, Reducing Health Risks from Warming Temperatures and Weather Disasters: A Progress Update.
- Put information about upcoming webinars and conferences on the website and posted social media.
- Developed information about NIH/NSF funding announcement information for the site. Applications continue to be accepted for quick response awards.
- Promote the first annual Café Climate and Health Conference that will occur virtually on February 5-7, 2024. This will help build a community of practice.

II. Public Information and Outreach

The online Environmental Factor is produced monthly by NIEHS OCPL and has nearly 16,000 subscribers.

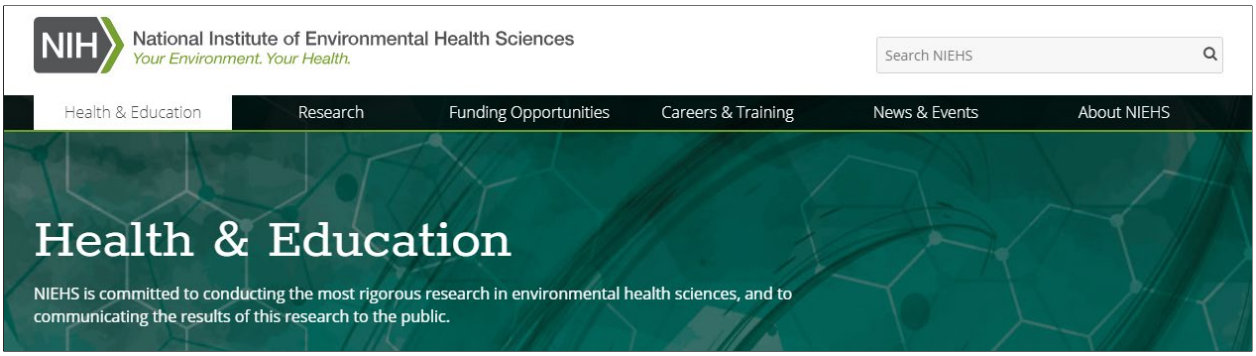
Each month, the Environmental Factor includes a column from Rick Woychik, called the "NIEHS Director's Corner."

- **In January**, Research into totality of exposures – the exposome – advanced by NIEHS. The NIEHS director spoke with Drs. David Balshaw and Yuxia Cui from NIEHS about our institute's efforts to promote exposomics in the U.S. and around the world.
- **In December**, Burn pits' complex emissions simulated in NIEHS grantee's laboratory. The NIEHS director spoke with Tim Nurkiewicz about his use of combustion generators and rodent models to gain insight into the emissions' potential effects on Veterans.
- **In November**, Light and dark: underappreciated exposures with big effects on health. For this conversation, Rick Woychik talked with Mariana Figueiro about how too much or too little exposure to light and dark can disrupt human biology and influence disease.
- **In October**, Breast cancer disparities top of mind for NIEHS grant recipient. The NIEHS director spoke to Justin Colacino about his research into why Black women are especially vulnerable to an aggressive form of the cancer.
- **In September**, Diet and exposures in pregnancy: grantee tackles research, messaging. Dr. Woychik speaks to Emily Oken about fish consumption during pregnancy, how diet influences effects of PFAS, and more.

An archive of all NIEHS Director's Corner is available at https://factor.niehs.nih.gov/previous-directors-corners#/

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 nearly 50 publications, all downloadable.

New Fact Sheets. OCPL developed a new fact sheet that is focused on Cosmetics and Health. It highlights NIEHS research findings.

Another fact sheet on Arsenic and Your Health gives an overview of this toxic substance and highlights NIEHS research, much of which is conducted by the Superfund Research Program.

Updated Health Topics. OCPL strives to continually update health topics webpages, such as the following:

- Women's Health and the Environment
- Native American Health and the Environment

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.***

The demand for social media coverage of NIEHS research, scientists, and events continued to rise in 2023. There was a 15% increase in total posts and an 18% increase in the production of original content (i.e., custom graphics, videos).

NIEHS OCPL regularly posts content through these platforms:

- Facebook targets a general audience.
- X/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.

Year	NIEHS Twitter/X Posts (including retweets)	NIEHS Facebook Posts	NIEHS LinkedIn Posts
2023	791	342	219

Social Media Growth

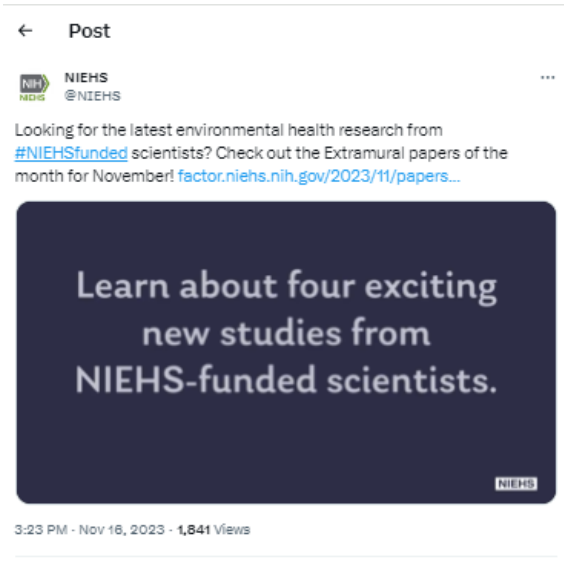
NIEHS social media followership continues to steadily increase. From **August 2023 through January 2024,** the NIEHS:

- X/Twitter feed increased from 23,422 to 23,836 followers.
- Facebook page increased from34, 621 to 35,465 followers.
- LinkedIn page increased from 9,751 to 10,892 followers.

Social Media Examples

X/Twitter:

An example above of how our grantees can work with us to share news on social media.



Facebook:

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
November 22, 2023 ·

Endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) are natural or human-made chemicals that may mimic, block, or interfere with the body's hormones, which are part of the endocrine system. These chemicals are associated with a wide array of health issues. http://bit.ly/3mOVGb5

17 1 comment 4 shares

Like Comment Share

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
December 19, 2023 ·

Two scientists with NIEHS ties were recognized for research excellence and service this fall by the National Academy of Medicine. Kenneth Olden, Ph.D., director emeritus of NIEHS, was honored for distinguished service. M. Daniele Fallin, Ph.D., an #NIEHSfunded researcher from Emory University Rollins School of Public Health was one of 100 new members elected to the academy.

"I was pleased to be recognized for my efforts over the past 35 years to expand the concept of the en... See more

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
19 hours ago ·

Director Rick Woychik announces neuroendocrinologist Heather Patisaul will join NIEHS from NC State Biological Sciences as the next Division of Translational Toxicology scientific director. https://factor.niehs.nih.gov/.../1-feature-dtt-scientific... #NIEHSFactor

2 1 comment 1 share

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
November 27, 2023 ·

Residing in a more walkable neighborhood protects against obesity-related cancer risk, according to #NIEHSfunded researchers at Columbia Public Health and the NYU Grossman School of Medicine .

Obesity has been linked to increased risk for 13 types of cancer in women, and physical activity, independent of body size, lowers risk for some of these cancers.

Neighborhood walkability is a set of urban design features that promotes pedestrian activity, supports overall physical a... See more

PUBLICHEALTH.COLUMBIA.EDU
Women Living In More Walkable Neighborhoods Have Lower Rates of Obesity-Related Cancers

6

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
October 25, 2023 ·

An international group of experts, including NIEHS Scientists Chandra Jackson, Ph.D., took a deep dive in a recent study to better understand how a good night's sleep impacts human health. Read their findings at https://factor.niehs.nih.gov/.../improving-sleep-health

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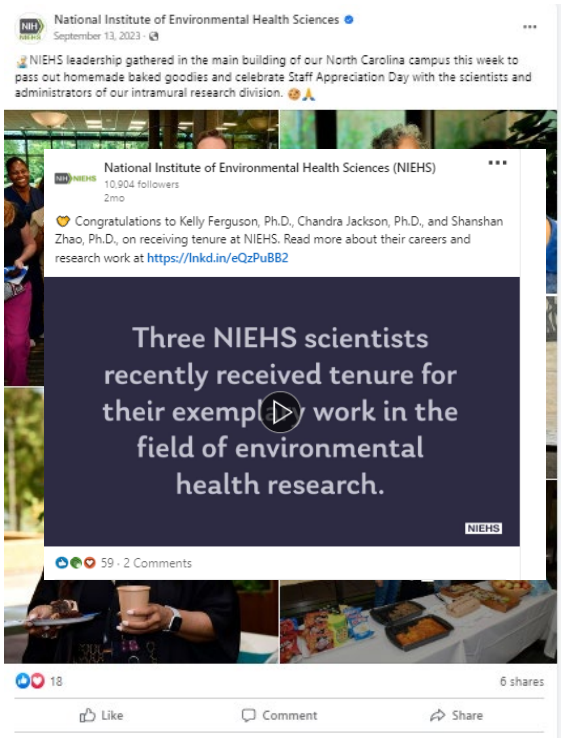
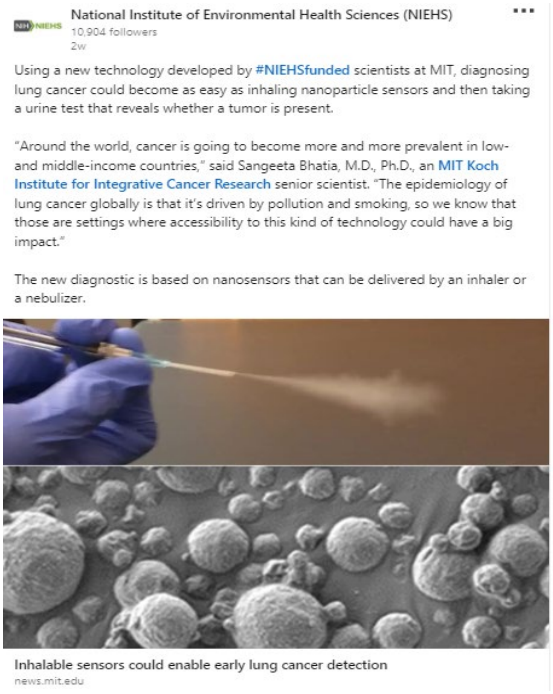
Linked In:


National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
September 13, 2023
NIEHS leadership gathered in the main building of our North Carolina campus this week to pass out homemade baked goodies and celebrate Staff Appreciation Day with the scientists and administrators of our intramural research division.
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)
10,904 followers
2mo
Congratulations to Kelly Ferguson, Ph.D., Chandra Jackson, Ph.D., and Shanshan Zhao, Ph.D., on receiving tenure at NIEHS. Read more about their careers and research work at https://lnkd.in/eQzPuBB2
Three NIEHS scientists recently received tenure for their exemplary work in the field of environmental health research.
NIEHS
59 · 2 Comments
18
6 shares
Like
Comment
Share

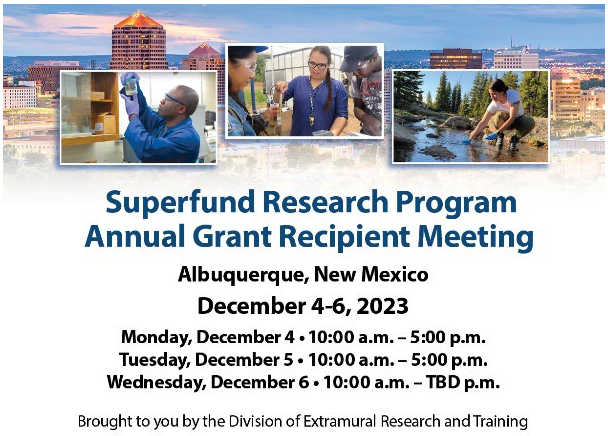
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)
10,904 followers
1mo
NIEHS with federal partners National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) proudly participated in the first New York State conference on Recovery Ready Workplaces- an effort to support recovery to addiction in workplaces and fight stigma. Read more at https://lnkd.in/exkf2zWi #NIEHSWTP
8

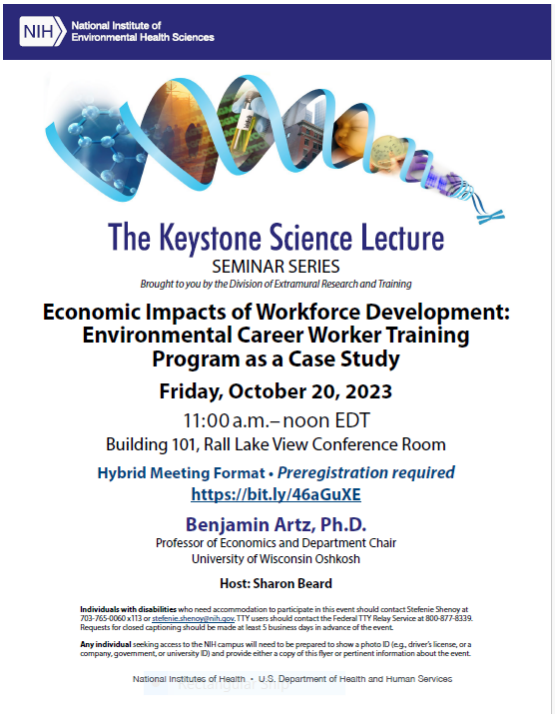
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)
10,904 followers
1mo
The NIEHS Reproduction and Developmental Biology Laboratory seeks a Staff Scientist 1 for the Pregnancy and Female Reproduction Group. This group uses molecular genetics, bioinformatics, cell culture, and animal models to the molecular mechanisms governing female reproductive tract function during pregnancy.
Learn more or apply at https://lnkd.in/g4842uDj #NIEHSjobs
NOW HIRING: Staff Scientist, Reproduction and Developmental Biology Laboratory
NIEHS
33


National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)
10,904 followers
2w
Using a new technology developed by #NIEHSfunded scientists at MIT, diagnosing lung cancer could become as easy as inhaling nanoparticle sensors and then taking a urine test that reveals whether a tumor is present.
"Around the world, cancer is going to become more and more prevalent in low- and middle-income countries," said Sangeeta Bhatia, M.D., Ph.D., an MIT Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research senior scientist. "The epidemiology of lung cancer globally is that it's driven by pollution and smoking, so we know that those are settings where accessibility to this kind of technology could have a big impact."
The new diagnostic is based on nanosensors that can be delivered by an inhaler or a nebulizer.
Inhalable sensors could enable early lung cancer detection
news.mit.edu

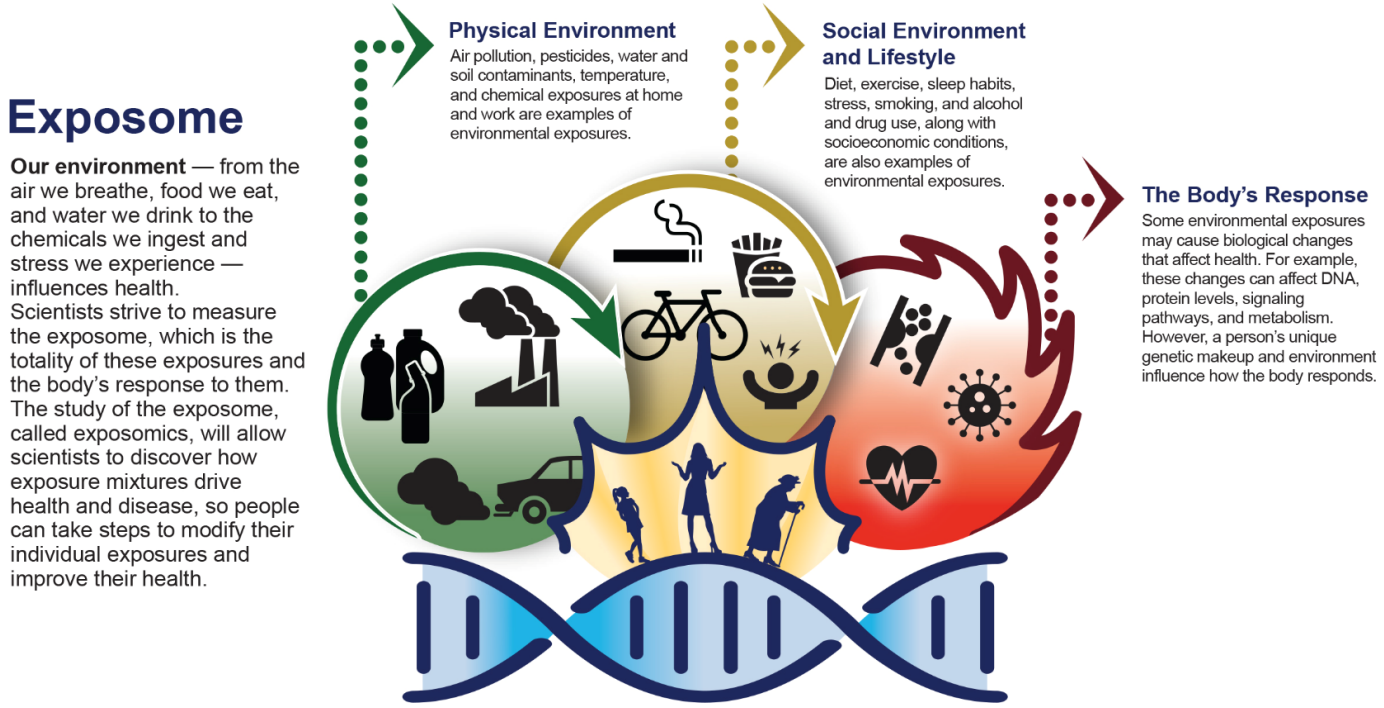
OCPL also creates graphics and materials to promote programs and events:

A few examples from August to January 2024 are provided below. These include promotions for both internal and external events.





Additional examples of OCPL design work created in support of NIEHS research:



OCPL developed this exposome graphic to convey information about this topic. It is used in the NIEHS Director's Column in January 2024.

OCPL helped develop the graphic for the new Climate and Health Outcomes Research Data Systems (CHORDS) web pages

OCPL helped develop and promote this poster to get input for COMPLEMENT-ARIE. The NIH is conducting planning activities to inform a potential Common Fund research program called Complement Animal Research In Experimentation (Complement-ARIE) aimed at development, standardization, validation, and use of new methods and approaches that will more accurately model human biology, known as New Approach Methodologies (NAMs)

OCPL also helps develop materials for **clinical trial recruitment**. Visit Join a NIEHS 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
January 11, 2024	Reduced Blood Lead Levels Linked to Lower Blood Pressure in American Indians A press release developed in collaboration with the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) and grantees.
October 2, 2023	Sister Study Turns 20
September 18, 2023	AI and Machine Learning Can Successfully Diagnose Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, New Study Confirms
September 12, 2023	NIH awards $50.3 million for “multi-omics” research on human health and disease.
September 11, 2023	NIH awards $50.3 million for “multi-omics” research on human health and disease

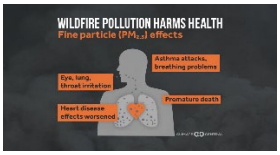
Date	News Releases from NIEHS funded Researchers
December 11, 2023	Largest study of its kind suggests physical activity reduces a woman's risk of developing breast cancer before menopause News release from The Institute of Cancer Research. The NIEHS intramural program contributed to this research.
October 11, 2023	Study Clearly Identifies Nutrients as a Driver of the Great Atlantic Sargassum Belt Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution issued the news release. NIEHS supports this research.
September 29, 2023	Global Call to Action on Sleep Health Published in The Lancet Public Health World Sleep Society issued this news release. Chandra Jackson of NIEHS intramural program is quoted.
September 12, 2023	NIH awards $50.3 million for "multi-omics" research on human health and disease NIEHS is participating in this program and contributing funding.

NIEHS in the News

NIEHS staff are often mentioned in a mix of top tier, trade, syndicated, and international news outlets. Examples follow that cover **August 2023-February 2024**. Selected news articles feature interviews with NIEHS staff or mentions of NIEHS as a resource.

Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
January 29, 2024	Everyone says trees are good for us. This scientist wants to prove it. 	**Washington Post**	https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2024/01/29/louisville-trees-heart-health/ **NIEHS funded grantee Aruni Bhatnagar, University of Louisville**
January 24, 2024	Is Dying Your Hair Bad for Your Health? Here's what the research suggests about the link between hair dye and cancer.	**New York Times** 	https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/well/hair-dye-health-cancer.html **Alexandra White of Division of Intramural Research (DIR) is quoted**
January 5, 2024	Indo-U.S. Workshop Concludes	**The Live Nagpur**	https://thelivenagpur.com/2024/01/05/indo-us-workshop-concludes/ Rick Woychik, NIEHS Director, and David Balshaw, Division of Extramural Research and Training Director, are quoted in this article.

Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
December 20, 2023	This Weed Killer Is Banned in 50 Countries. U.S. Workers Say It's Giving Them Parkinson's	**LA Times**	https://www.latimes.com/environment/story/2023-12-20/california-workers-say-herbicide-is-giving-them-parkinsons **Dale Sandler of DIR is quoted**
December 4, 2023	Using Keratin Treatments or Hair-Straightening Creams? Research Suggests Potential Cancer Risk	**The Wall Street Journal** 	**https://www.wsj.com/health/wellness/keratin-treatments-hair-straightening-creams-cancer-risk-b60fe102** **Dale Sandler of DIR is quoted**
December 2, 2023	Lead Can Alter Personalities, Pose Lifelong Risks. It's Still in America's Water Pipes.	**USA Today**	**https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2023/12/02/lead-exposure-poisoning-health-consequences/71764877007/** **NIEHS resources are mentioned**
December 1, 2023	Air Pollution Is Really Dangerous, Even More New Evidence Shows 	**Scientific American**	**https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/air-pollution-is-really-dangerous-even-more-new-evidence-shows/** **Alexandra White of DIR is quoted**
November 15, 2023	Glyphosate Exposure Linked to Behavioral and Gut Health Concerns in New Studies	**Beyond Pesticides**	**https://beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/2023/11/glyphosate-exposure-linked-to-behavioral-and-gut-health-concerns-in-new-studies/** **NIEHS and grantees mentioned**

Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
November 3, 2023	National Academies to Hold Virtual Derailment Workshop.	**The Review**	**https://www.reviewonline.com/news/local-news/2023/11/national-academies-to-hold-virtual-derailment-workshop/** **Aubrey Miller of NIEHS Office for the Director (OD) quoted**
November 7, 2023	Noise Pollution Harms More Than Your Hearing.	**National Geographic**	https://www.nationalgeographic.com/premium/article/noise-pollution-body-health-harm **Chandra Jackson of DIR is quoted**
October 24, 2023	Study links elevated pollution levels to breast cancer 	**Spectrum News**	https://ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/news/2023/10/23/elevated-pollution-levels-linked-to-breast-cancer?cq_ck=1698176742368 **Alexandra White of DIR is quoted**
October 13, 2023	Researchers say commonly prescribed hypertension drug, amlodipine, is safe and effective	**Medical News Today**	https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/researchers-say-commonly-prescribed-hypertension-drug-amlodipine-is-safe-and-effective#Bringing-clarity-to-high-blood-pressure-drugs **Anant Parekh of DIR is quoted**

Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
October 6, 2023	Indoor wood burning raises women's lung cancer risk by 43%, says US study	**The Guardian**	https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/oct/06/indoor-wood-burning-raises-women-lung-cancer-risk-study **Suril Mehta of DIR (Translational Toxicology) is quoted**
October 2, 2023	Sisters Share Special Secrets: Marking the 20th Anniversary of the NIEHS Sister Study	**Sanctuary**	https://www.sanctuary-magazine.com/october-2023-sister-study-dr-sandler--dr-obrien.html **An interview with Dale Sandler and Katie O'Brien of DIR**
September 14, 2023	The Cost of Straight Hair	**The New York Times Magazine**	https://www.thecut.com/article/hair-straightener-relaxers-cancer.html **Alexandra White of DIR is quoted**
August 20, 2023	'Forever Chemicals' Are Everywhere. What Are They Doing to Us?	**New York Times Magazine**	https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/16/magazine/pfas-toxic-chemicals.html **Sue Fenton of DIR is quoted.** **NIEHS grantees are quoted.**

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