National Advisory Environmental Health Sciences Council NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL) Report June 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 February 2024 OCPL Council Report.

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I. Events

Responding to East Palestine, Ohio, train derailment. For the past year, many local, state, and federal agencies, including NIEHS, have been part of a coordinated response to support the



communities affected by the derailment in East Palestine and surrounding areas of Ohio and Pennsylvania. From the early days of the disaster, NIEHS has been actively engaged to understand the community concerns about potential health impacts, and to identify opportunities for needed research.

 In February, OCPL provided information that President Biden used to announce six new research grants from NIEHS/NIH to study the

short-and-long term impacts on health.

• OCPL updated the time sensitive grants web pages to link to the 6 new awards.

- A March 2024 newsletter story, <u>Responding to the East Palestine</u>, <u>Ohio</u>, <u>train</u> <u>derailment</u>, provides an update on the NIEHS research response.
- Claudia Thompson, Ph.D., DERT, and Aubrey Miller, M.D., OD, have participated in a number of community engagement activities hosted by the White House and others.

NIEHS Director and Leaders catalyze research collaborations with India.



In January, NIEHS Director Rick Woychik, Ph.D., David Balshaw, Ph.D., who directs the Division of Extramural Research and Training and Sri Nadadur, Ph.D., who leads the Exposure, Response, and Technology Branch, spent time in India building collaborations with researchers there to generate data to document the harmful effects of air pollution and other hazardous environmental exposures that can inform policymakers in the

future,

• OCPL developed a newsletter <u>story</u> about the trip in the March issue of the Environmental Factor.

NIEHS Partnerships for Environmental Public Health (PEPH) Meeting in February.



On February 20-22, nearly 200 NIEHS-funded grantees, community leaders, and NIEHS staff gathered for the first in-person meeting since 2020 at NIEHS headquarters to

discuss common issues, approaches, and opportunities related to climate change and environmental justice. Workshops, poster sessions, and time to meet with the NIEHS director filled the two-day agenda.

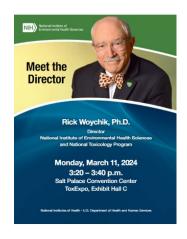
• A newsletter <u>story</u> about the meeting was developed for the April Environmental Factor.

NIEHS at Society of Toxicology Meeting in Salt Lake City. At the 63rd annual meeting of the Society of Toxicology (SOT) held March 10-14, NIEHS scientists and staff presented cutting-edge research on artificial intelligence (AI), neurotoxicity testing, harmful algal blooms, and climate change's influence on air quality, among many other topics.

Dori Germolec, Ph.D., of the Division of Translational Toxicology (DTT), served as SOT president, and Cynthia Rider, Ph.D., also of NIEHS DTT, served as vice president-elect.







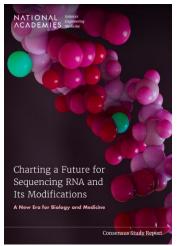




For this SOT meeting, OCPL:

- Set up and staffed the NIEHS exhibit.
- Developed a program planner of all NIEHS intramural and extramural activities, as well as NTP focused sessions.
- Developed promotional materials for many sessions and announcements including, several that are depicted here.
- Supported NIEHS DERT staff that were meeting with potential grant applicants in a dedicated funding room.
- Wrote and published an <u>Environmental Factor story in April</u> highlighting NIEHS activities at the conference.

NIEHS co-funds new NASEM report on Sequencing RNA and its Modifications.



NIEHS, along with NHGRI, and a non-profit foundation contributed to a new NASEM report, <u>Charing a Future for Sequencing RNA and its Modifications</u>, that was released on March 21. Fred Tyson, Ph.D., of DERT serves as the lead researcher on this topic for NIEHS. Tyson was interviewed and quoted in major science magazines, including <u>Science</u>.

• OCPL developed a newsletter <u>story</u> for the April issue of the Environmental Factor.

Women's Health Awareness Event in April.

On April 13, 2024, nearly 800 women from across North Carolina gathered to celebrate the



milestone 10th anniversary of the NIEHS Women's Health Awareness (WHA) Wellness Conference. The event was held at Hillside High School in Durham, North Carolina, and two satellite locations. Admiral Rachel L. Levine, M.D., Assistant Secretary for Health, provided

remarks via video at the event, in addition to having more than three-dozen information sessions and panel discussions, 50 resource booths, and free health screenings.

 OCPL helped develop registration and speaker bio webpages, a program catalog, and many more print and promotional materials for the event, including a newsletter <u>story</u> for the May issue of the Environmental Factor.



The Women's Health Awareness event and initiative are led by the NIEHS Clinical Research Unit to:

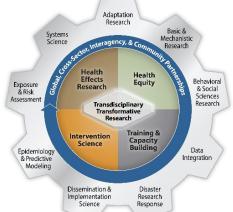
- Provide evidence-based community interventions to promote wellness, environmental health literacy, and environmental public health.
- Increase community health resiliency.
- Advance health equity by improving health care access and quality.

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 webpages.

Since the last council report, OCPL supported the initiative by:

- Making promotional materials for the <u>March 19</u> and <u>April 30</u> webinars, both posted to the NIH website and promoted via social media.
- Updating the "<u>Reducing Health Risks from</u>
 Warming Temperatures and Weather Disasters: A
 <u>Progress Update</u>" fact sheet and posting it on the
 NIH website in May.
- Developing a communications roll-out plan for the release of the 2023 NIH CCHI annual report. The release highlights progress made since the initiative launched in 2023. It is being shared broadly with stakeholders. The <u>final report</u> was added to the NIH and NIEHS webpages at end of April.





NIH Climate Change and Health Initiative Annual Report 🗈

NIEHS is pleased to join with other NIH Institutes and Centers to release the first NIH Climate Change and Health Initiative Annual Report. Read about the progress being made to advance the science of climate change and health.

II. Public Information and Outreach

The online newsletter, <u>Environmental Factor</u>, 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 February, <u>Zebrafish represent key piece to toxicology puzzle</u>, <u>Robyn Tanguay says</u>. The NIEHS director spoke with Tanquay about how these tiny fish can reveal important insights into environmental exposures and the ways they affect biology.



- In March, the NIEHS director sat down with the incoming Scientific Director of the NIEHS Division of Translational Toxicology, in the column, Patisaul set to forge innovation in toxicology, expand collaboration.
- In April, <u>Climate change and health: boosting resilience via adaptation science</u>. Woychik spoke with Peter Kilmarx, M.D., acting head of the Fogarty International Center, about how such research can bolster health interventions.
- In May, Microplastics' knowns, unknowns discussed by a physician-scientist. Woychik spoke with NIEHS grantee Kjersti Aagaard, M.D., Ph.D., about emerging research on the substances' pervasiveness and potential effects.

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 or Updated Fact Sheets and Other Materials. In March and April, the following fact sheets were updated or created.

- <u>Scientific Director's Traineeship for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (STrIDE) Research Training</u>
 Opportunity new fact sheet
- <u>Climate Change and Human Health (NIEHS)</u> updated fact sheet
- Integrated Chemical Environment updated pocket card
- <u>Training and Career Development Opportunities</u> updated brochure
- <u>Postdoctoral Training at NIEHS</u> updated brochure
- <u>Human Health Exposure Analysis Resource</u> (HHEAR) new handout on the data repository

Updated Health Topics Webpages. OCPL continually updates the NIEHS website's health topics webpages. Major webpage updates are undertaken as needed, such as the following:

Alternatives to Animal Testing

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.
- 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.

Social Media Growth

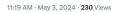
NIEHS social media followership continues to steadily increase. From January to May, the NIEHS:

- X/Twitter feed increased from 23,836 to 24,008 followers.
- Facebook page increased from 35,465 to 35,633 followers.
- LinkedIn page increased from 10,892 to 11,861 followers.

Social Media Examples

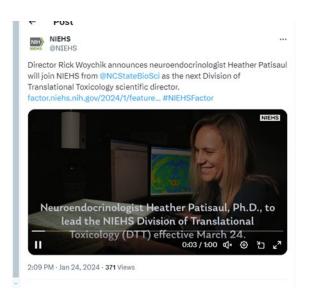
X/Twitter:

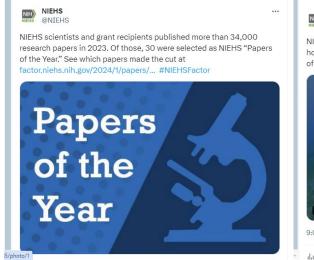


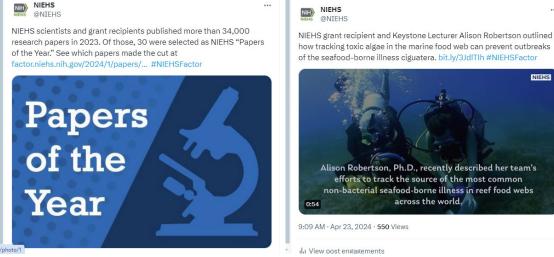


NIH NIEHS

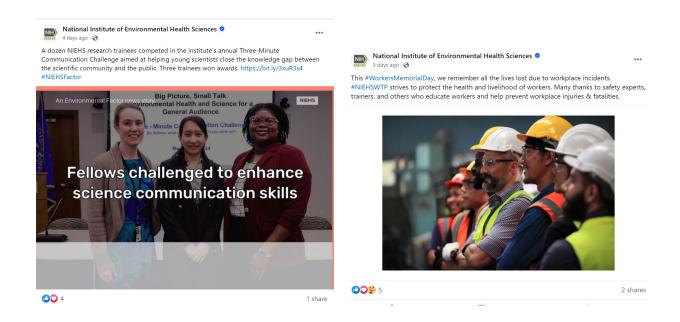
NIEHS @NIEHS







Facebook:

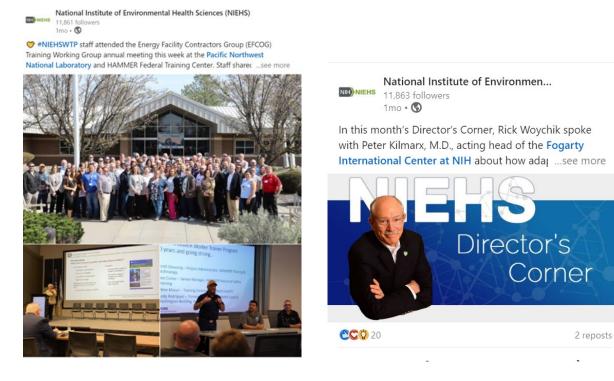






Linked In:





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

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





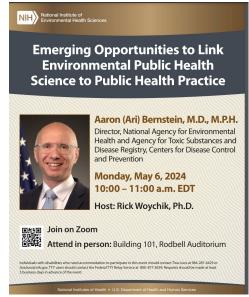




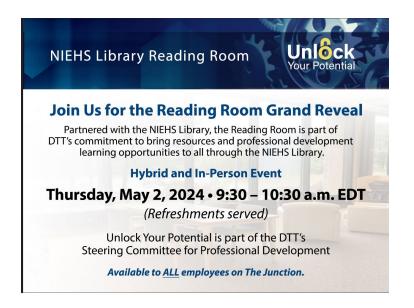








Additional examples of OCPL design work created in support of NIEHS research and collaboration:



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 |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| April 16, 2024 | 31-3 |
| | Microplastics, Algal Blooms, Seafood Safety Are Public |
| | Health Concerns Addressed by News Oceans and Human |
| | Health Centers |
| | NIH and NSF jointly fund new research centers to better |
| | understand how ocean-related exposures affect people's health. |
| | neatti. |
| Date | News Releases from NIEHS-funded Researchers |
| April 19, 2024 | Exposure to wildfire smoke during pregnancy increases risk |
| | of preterm birth |
| | University of California, Berkeley, issued this press release on research that was funded by NIEHS. |

| March 28, 2024: | \$3.8M grant will fund study of firefighter risks, interventions in wildland-urban blazes This is a Research to Action grant funded by DERT to University of Arizona Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health. |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| March 27, 2024: | Filters and Digital Health Program Reduced Participants' Arsenic Levels by Nearly Half in American Indian Households Relying on Well Water |
| March 18, 2024: | Study: Trees, Bushes Near Highways Can Significantly Reduce Air Pollution |

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 **February-May 2024**. Selected news articles feature interviews with NIEHS staff or mentions of NIEHS as a resource.

| Date | Headline/URL | Outlet | NIEHS spokesperson |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 04/26 | Meat Consumption and Breast Cancer Risk: What You Need to Know | Everyday Health | Dale Sandler of DIR is quoted. |
| 04/25 | Almost 40% of Americans Live With Dirty Air: Report | U.S. News & World Report | NIEHS is listed as an authoritative source. |

| 04/22 | 'Forever Chemicals' Are Known for Lingering in the Body. Menstruation Helps Expel Them | The Hill | Sue Fenton, formerly of DTT is quoted. She did the interview while still affiliated with NIEHS. |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 04/18 | Once Praised, Settlement to Help Sickened BP Oil Spill Workers Leaves Most With Nearly Nothing | Associated Press | Dale Sandler of DIR is quoted extensively in this story. |
| 04/17 | Exploring the Lung Microbiome's Role in Disease | Nature | Stavros Garantziotis of DIR is quoted. |
| 04/12 | Study: High Seafood Diet May Increase Risk of Exposure to 'Forever Chemicals' | United Press International | NIEHS funded this research and is listed as an authoritative source. |
| 04/08 | Insomnia Begins in Childhood and Persists Through Life | Neuroscience News | Chandra Jackson of DIR is quoted. |

| 04/08 | Higher Uterine Fibroid Risk for Black Women With Maternal Fibroid History | Healio | Christine Langton of DIR is quoted. |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 04/08 | Ultrasound Shows Ties Between Uterine Fibroid Risk, Family History Uterine fibroid risk for women whose mothers were diagnosed at age: 1.56 aHR = 1.11 20 to 29 years 30 to 39 years 40 years or older Healio* | Aunt Minne Science | Quaker Harmon of DIR is quoted. |
| 03/27 | How Animal Brains Tell Friends from Strangers | Scientific American | Serena Dudek of DIR is quoted. |
| 03/25 | Superfund Decision for Tarheel Army Missile Plant Relied on Incomplete Data The superfund Decision for Tarheel Army Missile Plant Relied on Incomplete Data | NC Newsline | Trevor Archer of OD quoted. |
| 03/26 | Source of Surging Autoimmunity May Lie in 'a Thousand Cuts' | Healio | Fred Miler of DIR, Emeritus quoted. |
| 03/21 | RNA deserves its own massive counterpart to the human genome project, researchers argue | Science | Fred Tyson of DERT is quoted. |

| 03/12 | Turf Fields May Have 'Forever Chemicals.' Should Kids Be Playing on Them? | Washington Post | NIEHS funded a study mentioned in the reporting. |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 03/06 | Baring Teeth: The Long Battle Over Fluoride Comes to a Head | Undark | Christine Flowers of OD is quoted and references to NTP reports. |
| 03/05 | Air Pollution Tied to Greater Amyloid Burden in the Brain | Medscape | NIEHS funded this study. |
| 02/19 | The All of Us Research Program Is an Opportunity to Enhance the Diversity of U.S. Biomedical Research | Nature Medicine | Rick Woychik, NIEHS Director is an author. |
| 02/16 | Biden Tried to Show Solidarity With East Palestine. He Found Divisions Instead | New York Times | Mentions NIH/NIEHS grants. |
| 2/16 | Biden Drinks the Water in Ohio and Praises 'Herculean' Cleanup After Train Derailment | USA Today | Mentions NIH/NIEHS grants. |

| 2/12 | Can Scientific Research Thrive Without Animals? | Eureka | Nicole Kleinstreuer of DTT is quoted. |
|------|-------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------|
|------|-------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------|