NEHA Policy Statements

One of the responsibilities of the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) is to speak up on issues of concern to our members and the profession through the adoption of policy statements. These statements have been vetted by our team and adopted by our Board of Directors as official statements of the association. Each statement sets forth our beliefs on a specific subject related to environmental health and is shared with state, local, and federal policymakers, as well as relevant environmental and public health boards. The policies remain active for 5 years.

Several of our policy statements were updated and approved by our board in July 2023. The following is a list of the updated statements:

- **Policy Statement on Climate Change:** We recognize climate change as a global environmental health problem that has health and safety impacts on individuals and communities. We support building the capacity of environmental health professionals to address the health impacts of climate change with risk assessment, adaptation, and mitigation planning. We support federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial jurisdictions in developing policies, using frameworks, and implementing plans to address climate and health, including technical assistance and training.

- **Policy Statement on Enrollment and Conformance With the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards of the Food and Drug Administration:** We recommend all federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial governmental agencies to enroll in the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards to implement current national standards that outline a process of program self-assessment and continuous improvement of existing regulatory program measures to help reduce foodborne illness risk factors. Enrollment and conformance ensure the safety and security of the food supply at the retail level.

- **Policy Statement on Food Safety Related to Consumable Cannabis Products:** We support the implementation of regulations related to consumable cannabis products that contain sufficient authority to prevent illness and encourage the inclusion of policies and actions to ensure food safety.

- **Policy Statement on Raw Milk:** We have long supported preventive measures to protect the safety of food for the public. Further, we acknowledge the importance of milk as a source of nutrition and are concerned about the safety of milk and milk products. Our position regarding raw milk is consistent with sound, science-based, preventive public health measures.

- **Policy Statement on Recreational Waters and the Model Aquatic Health Code:** We support national, state, and local policies, regulations, research, and resources that will enhance the abilities of environmental health professionals to ensure aquatic venue safety and to protect public health.

- **Policy Statement on the Need for Data Modernization and Informatics in Environmental Health Programs:** We support investments, regulations, and requirements as appropriate for standardization of data structures, data dictionaries, data sharing laws and policies, and messaging systems. Standardized system structures will support cross-jurisdictional data sharing; data collection, analysis, and visualization (DAV) systems; and research that aids decision support systems for policy and practice implementation. We also advocate for advanced training of the environmental health workforce in informatics and DAV systems.

Thank you to our committee members, board, and staff for their work on updating these policy statements. The updated statements, along with our other current statements, can be viewed at www.neha.org/policy.

NEHA Position Statements

Position statements reflect our position on certain concerns and actions that we will undertake as an association. These statements have been vetted by our staff and adopted by our Board of Directors as official actions or directions of the association. These statements set forth our beliefs on a specific subject related to environmental health. These positions remain active for 1 year. We have recently posted two new position statements:

- **Position Statement on Natural Disasters**
- **Role of Environmental Health in Addressing Environmental Justice**

Thank you to our committee members, board, and staff for their work on updating or drafting these policy statements. View all of our position statements at www.neha.org/positions.

NEHA Sunsets Three Credentials

Our Board of Directors voted in July 2023 to discontinue three of our credentials:

- Certified Food Outbreak Investigator (CFOI)
- Certified in Food Safety Supplier Audits (CFSSA)
- Registered Food Safety Auditor (RFSA)

While we will no longer be able to certify new individuals for these credentials, they continue to be a mark of distinction. We will continue to stand behind the credentials and encourage current credential holders to keep their credentials up-to-date by maintaining the necessary continuing education contact hours.

This change will allow us to focus our limited resources on our three premier credentials:

- Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian (REHS/RS)
- Certified Professional–Food Safety (CP-FS)
- Certified in Comprehensive Food Safety (CCFS)

Learn more about our credentials at www.neha.org/credentials.
Call for Abstracts for the NEHA 2024 AEC Closes on October 9

The Call for Abstracts for the 2024 Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition opened on August 28 and will close on October 9. We invite you to take advantage of this opportunity to provide unique insight and share your experience, expertise, knowledge, and research by submitting an abstract for our 2024 AEC in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on July 15–18, 2024. Your insight can provide fellow environmental health professionals with practical skills and knowledge they can take back to implement in their jurisdictions and departments.

The 2024 AEC Review Committee will review all abstract submissions based on quality, relevance, impact, and originality. Furthermore, the review committee reserves the right to request edits to submitted presentations or to reject a submitted presentation if it does not meet review criteria or follow submission guidelines.

Learn more about the submission process and our educational tracks, as well as submit your abstract, at www.neha.org/aec-call-abstracts.

NEHA-FDA RFFM Grant Program Portal Closes October 11

The grant portal for Year 3 of the NEHA-Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Retail Flexible Funding Model (RFFM) Grant Program will close on October 11. This annual funding opportunity supports state, local, tribal, and territorial retail food regulatory programs to meet the FDA Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards. These grants are supported by FDA under award U2FFD007358.

Retail food safety programs can apply for a base grant (through one of two tracks) and up to three additional add-on grants (for Track 2 applicants and Track 3 grantees). Consider applying for:
• A Track 1 Development Base Grant with options to be a mentee and/or attend a self-assessment and verification audit (SA/VA) workshop.
• A Track 2 Development Base Grant with options to be a mentee, work on Standard 9, and/or attend retail training courses.
• Optional Add-On Grants:
  » In addition to the options above, Track 2 applicants may also apply to be a mentor (instead of a mentee) and/or apply for a Special Projects Grant.
  » Existing Track 3 Maintenance and Advancement Base Grantees may apply to be a mentor or a mentee, request funds for retail training courses, and/or apply for a Special Projects Grant.

Learn more at www.neha.org/retail-grants.

2024 InFORM Conference

The Integrated Foodborne Outbreak Response and Management (InFORM) Conference brings together the network of public health officials involved with foodborne and enteric disease outbreak response. This network includes current federal, state, and local public health and environmental health specialists, epidemiologists, health communicators, and laboratory scientists. Held every 2 years, the conference consists of a keynote speaker, plenary and discipline-specific sessions, and poster presentations. The 2024 InFORM Conference will be held on January 22–24, 2024, in Washington, DC.

Invited participants include public health colleagues from local, state, tribal, or federal agencies and departments involved in enteric disease surveillance and outbreak response. This includes but is not limited to:
• Environmental health specialists involved in enteric disease outbreak investigations.
• Epidemiologists who investigate local or multistate enteric disease outbreaks.
• Health communicators involved in enteric disease outbreaks, prevention, and food safety education.
• Laboratory scientists who are a part of the PulseNet Network or who are interested in learning more about PulseNet.

The InFORM Conference celebrates this robust network of public health officials who are connected by cause, driven by data, and empowered by collaboration. If you are currently a public health official who works in foodborne and enteric diseases, please consider joining us for the first in-person InFORM Conference since 2017.

The initial abstract submission period closed on August 25, but a late breaker abstract submission period will open on October 2 and close on October 16. Take advantage of this submission window to ensure the environmental health perspective is included in discussions about foodborne and enteric disease outbreak response.

For more details on the 2024 InFORM Conference, visit www.neha.org/inform.