

## NEHA NEWS

## NEHA Supports Environmental Health at the 2017 InFORM Conference

By Elizabeth Landeen ([elandeen@neha.org](mailto:elandeen@neha.org))

The 2017 John J. Guzewich Environmental Public Health Team Award was awarded to the *Salmonella* Oranienburg Investigation Team at the Integrated Foodborne Outbreak Response and Management (InFORM) 2017 Conference, November 6–9, 2017, in Garden Grove, California. The award-winning team was comprised of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), City of Berkeley Divisions of Public Health and Environmental Health, and California Emerging Infections Program.

The team worked together throughout 2015 and 2016 to prevent additional illnesses due to a strain of *Salmonella* at a local Mexican restaurant in Berkeley, California. After identifying a cluster of illnesses associated with the restaurant in August 2015, CDPH and the City of Berkeley worked together to plan an assessment at the restaurant using environmental swabbing techniques. Initial results indicated the presence of *Salmonella* in the facility, which resulted in the closure of the restaurant. Once the restaurant reopened, subsequent inspections and environmental assessments were completed by the team to determine if microbial contamination had been eliminated from the restaurant's environment. Additional *Salmonella* findings were confirmed by the laboratory in 2016 and resulted in significant corrections by the restaurant owner to eliminate the source of contamination. CDPH laboratories completed all testing in an efficient manner and were able to compare pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) patterns from case patients and environmental samples to directly link the outbreak strain to the restaurant.

The John J. Guzewich Environmental Public Health Team Award recognizes the role of local, state, tribal, and territorial environmental and public health departments in protecting the national food safety system. Award winners are acknowledged for their efforts to promote and encourage innovative programs and best practices to prevent foodborne illnesses. The work and investigations done by the *Salmonella* Oranienburg Investigation Team highlights the exceptional teamwork between state and local public health agencies including epidemiology, environmental health, public health, and laboratory facilities.

NEHA is an active committee member for the InFORM Conference, which brings together laboratorians, epidemiologists, and environmental health specialists involved with foodborne and enteric disease outbreak response. NEHA's Elizabeth Landeen serves as the colead on the InFORM Environmental Health Planning Committee, along with Carrie Rigdon, who works at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and represents the Association of Food and Drug Officials. Landeen also serves on the Environmental Health Award Committee, along with NEHA President-



The *Salmonella* Oranienburg Investigation Team stands with some of NEHA's leadership (far left, Larry Ramdin; far right, Elizabeth Landeen and Vince Radke) after receiving the 2017 John J. Guzewich Environmental Public Health Team Award. Photo courtesy of Michèle Samarya-Timm.

Elect Vince Radke, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health/Environmental Health Services Branch; NEHA Region 9 Vice-President Larry Ramdin, Salem Board of Health; Michele DiMaggio, Contra Costa Environmental Health; and David Nicholas, New York State Department of Health.

Through a formal submission and review process, the committee thoroughly reviewed and discussed all submissions for the 2017 John J. Guzewich Environmental Public Health Team Award. The committee made the award selection in October, which was then presented at the InFORM 2017 Conference in November. NEHA congratulates the *Salmonella* Oranienburg Investigation Team for receiving this notable award!

## 2018 HUD Secretary's Awards for Healthy Homes

By Vanessa DeArman ([vdearman@neha.org](mailto:vdearman@neha.org))

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in partnership with NEHA, announces the fourth annual Secretary's Awards for Healthy Homes. These awards will recognize excellence in healthy housing innovation and achievement in four categories: public housing/multifamily supported housing; policy and education innovation; cross program coordination; and research among health, environment, and housing. The activities or policies nominated must show measurable benefits in the health of residents and be available to low- and/or moderate-income families. Applications will open January 5 on NEHA's and HUD's websites. The deadline to submit an application is February 28. Previous award winners are ineligible to apply. The awards will be presented at the NEHA 2018 Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition and HUD Healthy Homes Conference, June 25–28, in Anaheim, California ([www.neha.org/aec](http://www.neha.org/aec)). 🏠