

NEHA SECOND VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE PROFILES

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) is governed by a corporate board of directors who oversee the affairs of the association. The board is made up of two groups: national officers and regional vice-presidents. NEHA elects its national officers through a ballot that goes to all active and life members prior to the annual conference. Among other things, the ballot features the election for the position of NEHA second vice-president. The person elected to this position begins a 5-year commitment to NEHA that involves advancing each year to a different national office, eventually to become NEHA's president.

Election policy specifies that candidate profiles for the second vice-president be limited to 800 words in total length. If a candidate's profile exceeds that limit, the policy requires that the profile is terminated at the last sentence before the 800-word limit is exceeded. In addition, the submitted profiles have not been grammatically edited, but presented as submitted and within the 800-word limitation. This year, NEHA presents two candidates for the office of second vice-president. The candidates are listed alphabetically.



**CDR Anna Khan,
MA, REHS/RS**

NEHA has worked tirelessly to educate environmental health practitioners and ensure that they have the guidance, recommendations, and resources needed to perform their work. I am running for Second Vice-President of NEHA because I want to lift up the great work that NEHA

does while helping NEHA reach their future goals and elevate the role of EH practitioners because they are the true heroes, especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Also, I want to emphasize the importance of environmental health including climate change and environmental justice, areas that can no longer be ignored. Furthermore, I want to put us on the map as an organization that our counterparts in other countries can look to for the most up-to-date information, guidance, and recommendations.

I grew up in Maryville, TN, and attended Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) for undergraduate education in environmental health science and received my graduate education through Tulane University and the American Military University in Emergency and Disaster Management. During my time at EKU, I had the opportunity to intern at the local health department in Somerset, KY, and a Public Health Service CO-STEP with the Indian Health Service (IHS) in Arizona and saw some of the challenges that health departments and environmental health practitioners struggle with including operating with very tight budgets. I received my NEHA REHS/RS certification in 2007, a gold standard for environmental health practitioners, and I rely upon NEHA for the latest information and insight. NEHA is an integral part of environmental health. Through NEHA's support, guidance, and recommendations, environmental health practitioners are prepared with the latest evidence-based guidance and recommendations. This year, we have encountered many challenges in environmental health. The COVID-19 Pandemic has emphasized the critical mission of environmental health from food safety, worker safety, air, and water quality. We have also confronted 30 hurricanes costing the U.S. more than \$38 billion dollars and 340 fatalities; and over 100 wildfires that cost the U.S. \$2.7 Billion, destroyed more than 13,800 buildings, and caused 46 fatalities. Environmental health plays a key role in protecting the public's health and the need for environmental health practitioners continues to grow. Without environmental health practitioners' guidance and their willingness to step

up and do their jobs in some of the most difficult times, many of our businesses as well as public health would have been adversely impacted this year. We need to acknowledge the current changes happening in our communities and the impact of the issues as our world becomes even more connected.

I have been a USPHS officer for 14 years, currently serving as a Commander. I have worked for FDA and CDC. I am the Associate Director for Communication at the Division of Environmental Health Science and Practice (DEHSP), a division of ~300 environmental health professionals, in the National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) at CDC. My strategic efforts established partnerships, leveraged various communication platforms and crosscutting CDC channels, and amplified our outreach to tackle some of our most difficult environmental health messaging and combatting misinformation during COVID-19 Pandemic.

I have also worked on the global stage on emergency management, environmental health, health communication, and situational awareness. I was instrumental in the success of CDC's Public Health Emergency Management Fellowship, a gold standard for training global public health emergency management leaders. I increased annual training capacity from 8 to 32 fellows. As a WHO Infodemic Management Ambassador, I am rostered for senior leadership positions in global health emergency preparedness and response and will represent CDC, PHS, and environmental health with professionalism and poise.

I have actively served on PHS Applied Public Health Team for 10 years, awarded the Field Medical Readiness Badge, and the National Emergency Preparedness Award. I completed a master's degree in Emergency and Disaster Management to further my expertise and represented CDC and PHS admirably during emergency responses (Ebola, Zika, Polio, Unaccompanied Children, etc.) in multiple roles (operations chief, environmental health analyst, LNO, etc.) Most recently, I led the implementation of the COVID-19 Environmental Health Task Force's communication activities including managing and fielding 2,400 public inquiries and 300 media requests.

I think my contributions to the success of the National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) at CDC and the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) including leadership, dedication to environmental health, program management, and emergency management experience will complement the great work being done at NEHA. I am a dedicated PHS officer in a prominent and high impact position at CDC and my recognition by leadership,

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and my dedication to constantly lead by example, innovation, and a devotion to protecting and promoting the Nation's health makes me a good candidate for the Second Vice-President position at NEHA.



Rachel Stradling, JD, BSc (Hons), CP-FS, REHS, MCIEH

If I am fortunate enough to be elected as the National Environmental Health Association's Second Vice-President, I will work diligently to promote NEHA and the vital work that our profession does every day to keep our communities safe. I

will help to be the voice of Environmental Health, using my varied background to help tell our story. I will pledge to help mentor new students and work with the NEHA board to create new opportunities and programs that help promote our profession.

I have had a hugely varied and exciting career in Environmental Health, which has spanned over twenty years and two different countries. I started my career as a trainee Environmental Health professional, spending four years learning the theory and practice of our profession with some of the most amazing mentors, that helped shape the professional I am today. Those mentors not only taught me environmental health, but they showed me the real difference we can make to a family, to a community and to our profession.

After four years of intense training and a First Class Honors Degree in Environmental Health, I moved into a corporate environment as a risk management and legal compliance manager for the fifth largest UK food retailer. The role was challenging, offering me my first experience of managing staff, and learning hard lessons in the need to delegate. I quickly learned the art of negotiation and perfected my communication skills to achieve corporate legal compliance during a period of scarce resourcing and ever increasing media attention. After the corporate world, I formed my own consulting company, helping to train food safety professionals, giving advice to new startup businesses and providing my services to some of the busiest boroughs in central London. Owning your own business is an amazing but terrifying experience - the buck definitely stops with you!

In 2011, my family made the biggest move of all, to the United States where I met my next generation of mentors, who

helped me navigate a new culture and fulfil my career potential. I have worked with the Virginia Department of Health for 8 years, having started as an Environmental Health Specialist and working my way back up the career ladder to manage my own team of professionals, running a small but mighty team in Alexandria, Virginia.

I believe that my varied background, spanning private and public sector work makes me uniquely qualified for this elected position. I hope that being able to reflect on my own struggles to restart a career in a new country, will help guide others that are perhaps turning to Environmental Health as a second career, or those just starting out for the first time. I passionately believe in the concept of mentorship, and believe strongly that when we work together that everyone benefits from our combined success.

Environmental Health is an exciting but often unknown profession. Many of us stumble into it accidentally, but we do truly inspiring work that should be shouted from the roof tops. We're often the backbone of public health, preventing disease and ensuring wellbeing, but our work goes un-noticed.

I know that my background makes me think about situations a little differently. When other environmental health departments were discussing regulating COVID-19 requirements and enforcement, I was looking at ways to help businesses stay open, but safely. I firmly believe that working together to solve a problem comes up with the best solutions. My team worked with businesses, economic development groups and the tourism industry to find a way to reopen safely, and in the process created an award winning program that asked businesses to go above and beyond mandated requirements and pledge a promise to the safety of their customers and staff. This program was only possible with open and honest dialogue. I know I don't have all the answers, but my biggest strength is an ability to bring the best minds around the table, and find solutions.

I care passionately about our profession, and more importantly the next generation of Environmental Professionals. I strongly believe in the values and goals of the National Environmental Health Association. The pandemic has caused many of us and our teams to face new challenges, and I hope that if elected I'm able to use some of that experience to work with the NEHA membership to create support networks and mentorship opportunities across the country. 🐼

Did You Know?

National Groundwater Awareness Week is March 7–13. This year's observation is dedicated to the advocacy of groundwater safety and protection and increasing its access across the country. Learn more about this observance and how you can get involved at www.ngwa.org/get-involved/groundwater-awareness-week/groundwater-awareness-week-2021.