

## NEHA NEWS

**NEHA Announces the Dr. Bailus Walker, Jr. Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Award**

Organizations around the country are striving to increase diversity awareness and the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) is no exception. Each NEHA member has immense value and together we can achieve common goals if we foster equality and inclusion in our association. The conflicts within our society that stemmed from incidents of injustice and inequity in 2020 have prompted reactions from many individuals and organizations. One step NEHA leaders are taking to denounce racism and promote diversity is the introduction of the Dr. Bailus Walker, Jr. Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Award.

Dr. Bailus Walker, Jr. had a long career as a researcher, faculty member, and administrator in public, environmental, and occupational health. Dr. Walker was a professor of environmental and occupational medicine and toxicology in the College of Medicine, Department of Community and Family Medicine at Howard University in Washington, DC. He was a consultant to public health programs seeking accreditation. He wrote prolifically in the field of public, environmental, and occupational health. He was a long-time member and supporter of NEHA. Many of his students, leaders, employees, and mentees speak highly of his teaching, consulting, and the examples he set. He worked in several states—Alabama, California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Oklahoma, and Washington, DC—affecting many schools of public health during his career.

Dr. Walker wrote and spoke on public health, toxicology, and diversity in the field of environmental health. He was the recipient of numerous awards for his work, including NEHA's highest honor, the 1984 Walter S. Mangold Award. He chaired a congressional CSPAN meeting on environmental racism in 1993 that pulled in several experts on the topic and shed light on the harm to communities of color. Dr. Walker headed various state and federal government working groups, committees, and task forces. He was a past president of the American Public Health Association (APHA). APHA Executive Director Dr. Georges C. Benjamin called Dr. Walker a “true public health champion.” It is a fitting honor for NEHA to recognize Dr. Walker by naming the new Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Award after him. It is our hope that his endeavors in diversity and environmental health will be remembered through this award.

The Dr. Bailus Walker, Jr. Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Award will be given annually to recognize an individual or group who made significant achievements in the development and enhancement of a more culturally diverse, inclusive, and competent environment. The qualified individual or group will demonstrate diversity in performance in their organization and community. The application period will be open from January 15–April 15, 2021. Eligibility requirements and the award application can be found at [www.neha.org/about-neha/awards/dr-bailus-walker-jr-diversity-and-inclusion-awareness-award](http://www.neha.org/about-neha/awards/dr-bailus-walker-jr-diversity-and-inclusion-awareness-award).

**NEHA Thanks the Colorado Gives Campaign Supporters**

Thank you for supporting the NEHA/AAS Scholarship during NEHA's first Colorado Gives campaign. Colorado Gives Day brought in a record number of donations made to the NEHA/AAS Scholarship fund in one single day, as well as a wealth of first-time supporters. We are tremendously thankful for the NEHA community. Your support of environmental health students and NEHA's mission to advance the environmental health professional for the purpose of providing a healthful environment for all means the world to us. Read more about the campaign results online at [www.neha.org/about-neha/donate/neha-participates-colorado-gives-day](http://www.neha.org/about-neha/donate/neha-participates-colorado-gives-day).

**NEHA Updates REHS/RS Study Guide and Exam**

A new study guide for NEHA's Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian (REHS/RS) credential will be available for purchase in mid-June 2021. In addition, the new REHS/RS exam will begin being administered on September 1, 2021. Virtual town hall sessions will be presented February–April for anyone who wants to learn more. Town hall dates and times are available on the NEHA website at [www.neha.org/rehs](http://www.neha.org/rehs).

You can also visit our FAQs and the updated REHS/RS exam blueprint for further details at [www.neha.org/node/61744](http://www.neha.org/node/61744). Questions can be directed to Sarah Hoover, credentialing manager, at [shoover@neha.org](mailto:shoover@neha.org).

No issues are more important to the communities in which we live and work than clean air, safe food, and potable water. An individual with an REHS/RS credential has the skill set to ensure that these basic community necessities are met, as well as manage other critical functions such as emergency response, vector control, sewage sanitation, hazardous material handling, and more.

The REHS/RS is the most prevalent NEHA credential and professionals demonstrate competency in an impressive range of environmental health issues, directing and training personnel to respond to routine or emergency environmental situations, and providing education to their communities on environmental health concerns. In addition, REHS/RS credential holders are key members in ensuring communities are in compliance with local, state, and federal environmental health regulations.

**You Are Essential to NEHA's Government Affairs**

Environmental health professionals are critical but the value of their work is not always fully understood. NEHA knows better than any other association why environmental health professionals are so vital, which is why NEHA partners with our members to tell the stories of their essential service and promote a deeper understanding of environmental health with policy makers and the public.

Policies and legislation made at national and state levels directly affect the environmental health profession. It has never been more important to stay informed and exercise our influence as a com-

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munity. NEHA is a trusted source that can speak directly about the issues that matter to you. Here are some of the ways that NEHA's Government Affairs is working to keep you informed:

**Your Insider in Government Affairs Blog:** Stay informed on critical and timely issues through this regularly updated blog at [www.neha.org/government-affairs/your-insider-government-affairs-blog](http://www.neha.org/government-affairs/your-insider-government-affairs-blog).

**Government Affairs Webinar Series:** If you missed any of our recent Government Affairs webinars, you can view them anytime on our website at [www.neha.org/node/61387](http://www.neha.org/node/61387). Past webinars include: "Environmental Health Priorities at CDC, FDA, and EPA Under the Biden Administration;" "Environmental Health Within the New Administration and Congress;" "Bridging the Gaps Between Environmental Quality and Public Health;" and "Food Safety Legislation Now and Future."

**Position Statements and Declarations:** These documents guide NEHA's efforts on public policy, directing our response to specific

issues affecting environmental health. Issues covered include COVID-19 vaccination, research and innovation in environmental health science, climate change, food safety, onsite wastewater systems, and more. A list of current policy statements and declarations can be found at [www.neha.org/publications/position-papers](http://www.neha.org/publications/position-papers).

NEHA's Government Affairs work is done on behalf of the members who support the work of our organization. This year we hope to grow our membership so that we can wield more influence and bring our members more of the resources that matter. Please consider spreading the word about NEHA as we can do so much more together than apart. Learn more about NEHA membership at [www.neha.org/membership-communities](http://www.neha.org/membership-communities).

Thank you for being involved. We could not do what we do without your participation. 🙏

## Did You Know?

You can stay up-to-date on environmental health issues within the various levels of government through NEHA's Government Affairs page at [www.neha.org/government-affairs](http://www.neha.org/government-affairs). Check out the Your Insider in Government Affairs blog, view one of the Government Affairs webinars, read a recent position paper or sign-on letter, or learn about recent state and federal legislative alerts.



## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

It's a tough job.  
That's why you love it.

Join the only community of people as dedicated as you are about protecting human health and the environment.

Begin connecting today through NEHA membership.

[neha.org/join](http://neha.org/join)

