

NEHA NEWS

The NEHA Office Has Moved!

By Kristen Ruby-Cisneros (kruby@neha.org)

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) is excited to announce the new location of the Denver office! We have moved from our suite of offices on the 10th floor to a new suite on the 1st floor of the same building.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Denver NEHA staff were working in the office 4–5 days a week, with most staff having individual offices. With the growth of the association and in anticipation of the upcoming lease ending on December 31, 2021, NEHA leadership started to explore office space needs. After surveying the staff and assessing needs, it appeared that NEHA would need to find a space larger than the 12,000 ft² it was currently using. Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

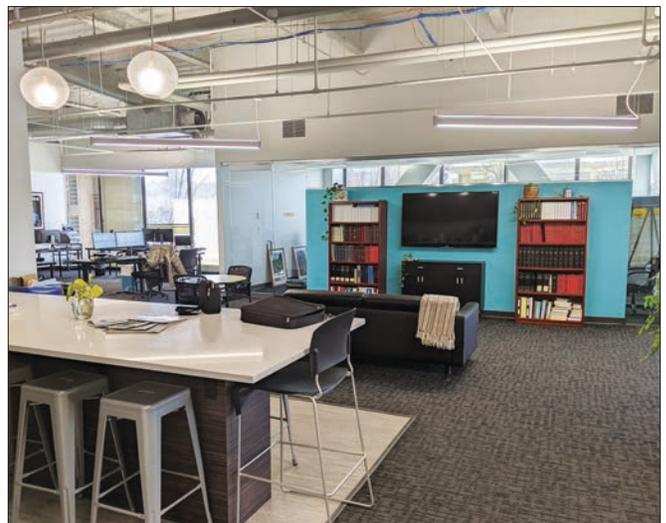
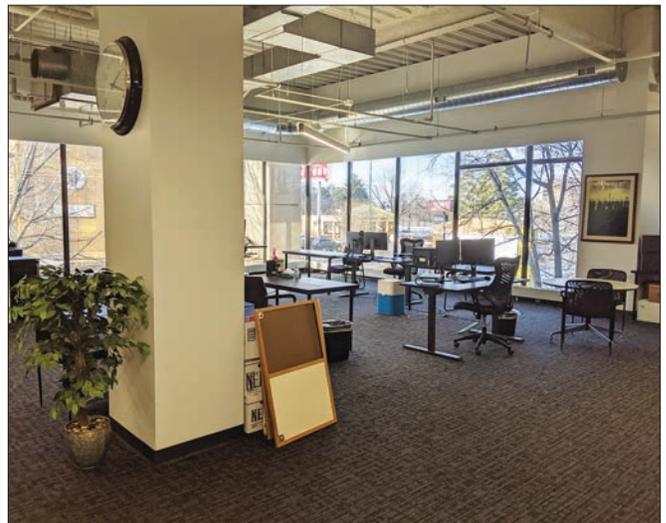
Starting on March 16, 2020, NEHA staff have been working remotely almost exclusively. Prior to the pandemic, NEHA had been updating its office technology capabilities, such as moving to cloud-based applications and providing staff with laptop computers. As a result, staff had the tools necessary to transition to remote work with little disruption to the day-to-day operations of the association. It was apparent to NEHA leadership that the model of individual offices and working exclusively in an office were outdated and NEHA needed to transition to a more flexible and sustainable office environment.

The new office space is approximately 6,000 ft² and offers an open floor plan conducive to collaboration and flexibility. Numerous workstations are available throughout the office for staff to use, as well as individual offices to reserve for work and meetings. The space also has a large conference room, central gathering area, kitchenette, and storage room. Extra storage space was secured in the basement to house historical documents and the *Journal of Environmental Health* archive. As seen in the photos taken in early January (courtesy of Kristen Ruby-Cisneros), we are still in the process of organizing and setting up our new space.

The first permanent office for the association was established in Los Angeles, California, in 1941. As the association grew it became clear that the national office needed to be centrally located. The decision to move to Denver was approved at the 20th annual conference held in Chicago, Illinois, in July 1956. The first Denver office was established on the University of Denver campus in 1957. The association moved into the current office building on Colorado Boulevard in late 1984, with offices first on the 9th floor of the South Tower and then moving to the 10th floor of the North Tower in July 2006. The official opening of the new office space on the 1st floor occurred on January 1, 2022.

The new NEHA address is: 720 South Colorado Boulevard, Suite 105A, Denver, Colorado, 80246-1910. NEHA phone numbers and email addresses have not changed (see pages 42–43 for a listing of staff emails and www.neha.org/staff for full contact information).

We look forward to working toward our mission to build, sustain, and empower an effective environmental health workforce in our new space.



NEHA Requests Input on Body Art Model Code

NEHA announced it will be updating its model code for body art and is requesting review and comment from the environmental health and body art communities. The NEHA Body Art Model Code serves as a resource for local and state organizations to update their own body art codes to protect public health.

The perception of body art has changed from extreme to generally accepted. A 2019 U.S. poll (www.ipsos.com/en-us/news-polls/more-americans-have-tattoos-today) illustrates this change, finding that about 30% of people living in the country have at least one tattoo, compared to 21% in 2012. Further, the poll found that 40% of people 18–34 years old and 35% of people 35–54 years old have at least one tattoo. Many individuals report having more than one tattoo. Body piercing has also grown in popularity. It is estimated that approximately 61% of adults in the U.S. have had a body piercing.

While most body art can be performed safely, it does carry risks, including the spread of bloodborne pathogens, skin infections, serious infections like methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, allergic reactions, keloids, nerve damage, and bleeding. The transmission of bloodborne pathogens, including hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV, can occur when dirty needles are reused or when proper cleanup techniques are not used. Body art codes set standards for mitigating these risks to individuals and communities.

The NEHA Body Art Model Code includes guidance on:

- professional standards;
- specific considerations for piercing, branding, and scarification;
- jewelry standards;
- public health notification;
- recordkeeping;
- informed consent;
- disinfection and sterilization;
- biomedical waste;
- licensing requirements;
- inspection; and
- enforcement.

“Our goal is to provide the best, most useful guidance possible so that environmental health professionals at the local level can focus on the real work of partnering with body art facilities to keep communities safe and healthy,” said David Dyjack, DrPH, CIH, NEHA executive director.

NEHA first introduced the Body Art Model Code in 1998, updated it in 2019, and created a supporting Annex in 2021. NEHA has also published a policy statement on body art (www.neha.org/body-art-policy-statements). NEHA advocates for national, state, and local policies, regulations, research, and resources that will enhance the ability of environmental health professionals to ensure the practice of safe body art procedures to better protect public health.

Anyone who would like to recommend changes to the current NEHA Body Art Model Code should go to www.neha.org/BAMC Change by **June 30, 2022**, to submit their comments. Comments are requested on both grammar and content.

National Environmental Public Health Internship Program

The National Environmental Public Health Internship Program (NEPHIP) is a 10-week internship opportunity that links environmental health undergraduate and graduate students from universities accredited by the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) with qualified public health departments. NEHA has partnered with the Water, Food, and Environmental Health Services Branch of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the past 7 years to support state, tribal, local, and territorial (STLT) public health department internships for environmental health students through NEPHIP. NEPHIP aims to encourage environmental health students to consider careers at STLT environmental public health departments following graduation.

In 2022, NEHA is launching a revised and expanded NEPHIP. The expanded program will offer a variety of additional features:

- Opportunity to enroll in summer (2022), fall (2022), and spring (2023) internships (accepting up to 50 interns).
- Diversity and inclusion within the environmental health workforce. (Please note that NEHA measures diversity across many variables including being a first-generation college student, age, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, neurodiversity, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation, geographical area, etc.)
- Participation in a series of professional career mentorship sessions with environmental health professionals in STLT departments.
- Opportunity to attend the first ever NEPHIP virtual career fair.
- Networking and engagement opportunities for interns at the NEHA Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition, including a professional development preconference workshop.
- Sustained support and promotion for internship work through publications and media.
- Improved coordination and evaluation efforts.
- Focus on projects that explore climate and health, sustainability, health inequities, and environmental justice issues.
- Support packages for participating environmental public health departments to help offset costs for hosting interns.

Through the expanded NEPHIP, students will be exposed to exciting career opportunities as well as the benefits and challenges of working with environmental public health agencies throughout the nation. The program connects highly qualified environmental health students at undergraduate and graduate levels with influential STLT public health departments with the purpose of:

- Exposing environmental health students to the important purpose and work of STLT public health departments.

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- Presenting students with career and mentorship opportunities at public health departments.
 - Providing STLT public health departments with a qualified intern, at no cost, who is eager to gain field experience and contribute to the work of the department.
 - Increasing awareness of EHAC-accredited programs and the value of working with and hiring their students and graduates.
- NEHA administers NEPHIP and is supported by cooperative agreement CDC-RFA-OT18-1802.

The application period for students and health departments opened on January 27 and will close on March 9 for summer session applications. Student applications will be accepted on a rolling basis if positions are open and available past the deadline. The application portal will be ongoing for interested health departments.

To learn more and submit an application, visit www.neha.org/nephip.

2022 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, including 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 2022 InFORM Conference will be held virtually on April 26–29. Invited participants include public health colleagues from local, state, tribal, or federal agencies and departments involved in enteric disease surveillance and outbreak response. This invitation 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 PulseNet or who are interested in learning more about PulseNet.

Several awards will be presented at the 2022 InFORM conference, including the Kati Kelley Award for Exceptional Service to PulseNet, Bill Keene Award for Excellence in Epidemiology, John J. Guzewich Environmental Public Health Team Award, and The People's Protector Communication Award.

Online preregistration is required. Early bird registration ends April 1. Registration scholarships are available. Scholarship applications must be submitted no later than March 14 to be considered. To register and learn more, visit www.neha.org/inform.

NEHA Adopts Positions on Key Environmental Health Concerns

NEHA has researched and carefully crafted a series of new policy statements in response to concerns from environmental health professionals and industry. The statements include topics on body art, food safety, vector control, well water testing, mosquito control, the role of environmental health in preparedness, and a uniform and integrated food safety system.

“One of our responsibilities is to raise the voice of the environmental health profession on issues our members and leadership have identified as concerns,” said David Dyjack, DrPH, CIH, NEHA executive director. “Our team of subject matter experts is able to conduct the research on best practices on behalf of local, state, territorial, and tribal areas and provide recommendations about how to protect public health.”

Each statement has been vetted by NEHA and adopted by the NEHA Board of Directors as official statements of the association. The policy statements are shared with local, state, and federal policy makers, including both the executive and legislative branches and relevant environmental and public health boards. NEHA policy statements remain active for 3 years.

The new policy statements include:

Body art: The current landscape of body art legislation is fragmented with inconsistent safety standards and professional requirements, as well as a lack of enforcement mechanisms. NEHA recommendations include robust legislation requiring that body artists are licensed and work in licensed facilities, that facilities have met licensing thresholds, and that there is an enforcement mechanism in place.

Food safety: The current capacity for tracking and surveilling foodborne disease outbreaks is fragmented and not sufficiently standardized across agencies and organizations that protect public health. Additionally, the lack of traceability and transparency in the supply chain has made tracking outbreaks more difficult and time consuming, resulting in more illnesses, deaths, and money lost. Recommendations include improved technology for tracking and intervention, education, credentialing, and training food safety regulators.

Vector control: Deficiencies in funding, research, and surveillance—paired with increased contact between humans, animals, and the environment—make preventing vectorborne diseases a challenge that the U.S. is not currently equipped to handle. NEHA recommendations include incorporating the vector management framework outlined by CDC, the American Mosquito Control Association, and World Health Organization, while also integrating a One Health approach.

Well water quality testing: More than 15% of the population relies on a private well as their primary source of drinking water, for which there are no federal water quality requirements. Most states do not regulate private well water quality. NEHA recommendations include

implementing local or state legislation requiring and regulating private well water quality testing and collecting and sharing information about identified contaminants in the area with the community.

Mosquito control: Increasing urbanization, changing land use patterns, and expanding international travel and trade bring humans and animals into more frequent contact with mosquitoes, while climate and other environmental changes also fuel their spread. There is insufficient sustained and organized funding for mosquito control programs, which has led to nationally inconsistent and socioeconomically biased programs. As such, NEHA recommends incorporating the vector management framework outlined by CDC, the American Mosquito Control Association, and World Health Organization, as well as the foundation of a national public health framework for the prevention and control of vector-borne diseases in humans as outlined by CDC.

Uniform and integrated food safety system adoption: It is estimated that approximately 48 million people in the U.S. become sick from a domestically acquired foodborne illness annually. Of these people, 128,000 are hospitalized and 3,000 die. The economic impact of foodborne illness has been estimated at \$152 billion annually for direct medical care and loss of quality of life. NEHA recommendations include adoption of the most up-to-date Food and Drug Administration model *Food Code*, consistent reporting of data, using an integrated food safety system, and training food service personnel.

Role of environmental health in preparedness: Environmental health professionals play a critically important role in public health preparedness, response, and recovery to mitigate injury and illness during and after emergencies and disasters. NEHA recommendations include integrating environmental health into public health emergency preparedness and providing practical function and skills-based training for environmental health professionals.

All current NEHA policy and position statements, as well as past statements, are available at www.neha.org/policy-position-statements.

NEHA Celebrates Public Health Thank You Day



November 22 was Public Health Thank You Day. In partnership with NEHA, Representative Robert Wittman (VI-R) submitted a concurrent resolution to Congress recognizing the profound contribution that environmental and public health professionals have made in

response to the COVID-19 pandemic and make every day to the health, safety, and economic security of the country during Public Health Thank You Day.

“One of the many lessons highlighted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic is that our nation’s strength and resilience relies heavily on our dedicated public health and environmental health professionals. With 26 years of experience working in the Virginia Department of Health before coming to Congress, I recognize and appreciate that research and practice are vital to the security, economic development, and well-being of people throughout our nation. Recognizing these dedicated individuals through this Resolution on Public Health Thank You Day 2021 is the least we can do to honor the service and sacrifice our public health professionals play in keeping our communities safe, healthy, and prosperous,” said Representative Wittman.

The resolution states that environmental and public health professionals should be “applauded, extolled, and thanked on Public Health Thank You Day for their deeply important contributions to the Nation.”

The work of environmental and public health professionals has been vital to successfully reducing and abating many of the health threats our communities face, from measles and foodborne illnesses to hazardous waste, lead poisoning, and bioterrorism agents.

“Environmental health professionals are modestly compensated, unseen, and unrecognized by most,” said David Dyjack, DrPH, CIH, NEHA executive director. “Yet they remain dedicated to protecting our communities and have even taken on expanded duties under stressful conditions during the pandemic.”

Learn more about this resolution and celebration at www.neha.org/node/62329.

NEHA Giving Tuesday Campaign Success

By Alexis Nally (atnally@neha.org)



A very special thank you to those individuals who gave to our Giving Tuesday campaign on November 30, 2021, to support the NEHA/American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS) Scholarship Program. Throughout this unprecedented time, you have chosen to stick by our side. On behalf of the NEHA board and staff, we thank you for your commitment, it has meant so much to us all.

Thank you immensely to the 50 of our advocates who contributed to raising 85% of our goal. Contributions to the NEHA/AAS Scholarship Program make a long-lasting impact on deserving students in need and inspires them to persist as they prepare to join you in the environmental health workforce. It is for these students that we continue to come together. Whether you donated, shared our social media posts, or even ran your own fundraiser on our behalf, you were instrumental in helping make our campaign a triumph. We are humbled by your generosity and excited for the future we can give dedicated students pursuing environmental health programs.

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For those who gave a tribute gift on behalf of someone from your community, please know that their legacy will be honored through the work we do to fulfill our mission to build, sustain, and empower an effective environmental health workforce.

Thank you to our Giving Tuesday supporters:

Rance Baker, in memory of Brian Hess
 Gina Bare, in memory of Brian Hess
 Marcy Barnett
 Jesse Bliss, in memory of Dr. Samuel Soret
 D.G. Brown, in memory of Dr. Carolyn H. Harvey
 Thomas J. Butts
 Kimberley Carlton
 Renee Clark
 Brian K. Collins, in memory of George Nakamura
 Richard F. Collins
 Alan M. Croft
 Kristie Denbrock
 Michele R. DiMaggio, in memory of George Nakamura
 Gery M. DuParc
 David T. Dyjack, in memory of George Nakamura
 Soni Fink
 Cynthia Goldstein
 Karen Hoffman Bender
 Donna M. Houston
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 Chintan Somaiya, in memory of Dr. Samuel J. Soret
 James Speckhart
 Jordan Strahle
 Denise K. Takehara
 Christl Tate
 Ned Therien
 Gail P. Vail
 Tom A. Vyles
 Lisa Whitlock
 Webster Young, Jr.
 Margaret Zarriello

Read more about our Giving Tuesday campaign at www.neha.org/giving-tuesday.

Thank You for Supporting NEHA

By Alexis Nally (atnally@neha.org)

On behalf of the NEHA board, staff, and program participants, we thank you for your commitment in supporting us throughout 2021. From over 300 donors, many of them being recurring donors and a surprising number of major donors, we have accomplished another year of ample investments to our funds—the NEHA/AAS Scholarship Program, NEHA Endowment Fund, and NEHA General Fund. These avenues exist so that you, our supporters, can give back to your professional association, helping us to advance the environmental health profession.

Thank you for your patience as we adjusted our work environments, took time for our health, and found steady ground while navigating the uncharted territory of COVID-19 and its different variants. Our commitment to you is that we will continue to remain steadfast in our mission to build, sustain, and empower an effective environmental health workforce.

Through the support we have received in years past, we are proactively planning opportunities for our supporters that will ignite a sense of community, teamwork, and promise. It is our time to lend a greater hand in healing our communities and we hope you will join us in the year ahead. Learn more about how to donate to NEHA at www.neha.org/donate.

Did You Know?

Members are extremely important to NEHA and its mission. NEHA's membership structure includes five different membership categories—Professional, Emerging Professional, Retired Professional, International, and Life. Environmental health professionals can benefit from NEHA membership at any career stage. NEHA membership provides credibility, learning, community, and influence. Learn more at www.neha.org/join.

Preconference Offerings at the NEHA 2022 Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition



The NEHA 2022 Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition—to be held on June 28–July 1 in Spokane, Washington—will include a full preconference schedule offering attendees the opportunity to take a credential review course or attend a workshop or training on a variety of environmental health topics.

More details and registration information about the preconference offerings can be found at www.neha.org/aec/preconference.

Certified Professional–Food Safety (CP-FS) Credential Review Course (June 26–27)

This 2-day refresher course is designed to enhance your preparation for the NEHA CP-FS credential exam. The course will cover exam content areas as described in the CP-FS Candidate Information Brochure. The instructor will be available during and after the course for questions. The CP-FS exam will not be offered during the review course and an additional application and fee to take the exam must be completed separately online. *Cost: \$449 for NEHA members and \$549 for nonmembers. Registration includes the CP-FS Study Package (CP-FS manual and flash cards).*

Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian (REHS/RS) Credential Review Course (June 26–28)

This 2.5-day refresher course is designed to enhance your preparation for the NEHA REHS/RS credential exam. The course will cover exam content areas as described in the REHS/RS Candidate Information Brochure. The REHS/RS exam will not be offered during the review course and an additional application and fee to take the exam must be completed separately online. *Cost: \$549 for NEHA members and \$649 for nonmembers. Registration includes the REHS/RS Study Guide (5th edition).*

Affiliate Leadership Workshop (June 28)

NEHA affiliate leaders are invited to collaborate, learn, and network at this half-day workshop. The goal of the workshop is to provide affiliates with tips and resources for running successful associations. *Cost: Free, preregistration is required.*

NEHA and ATSDR Environmental Health and Land Reuse (EHLR) Certificate Program (June 27–28)

This training course, developed and hosted by NEHA and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), aims to build capacity among environmental health professionals and within communities to help remediate and redevelop brownfield sites. The training explores the environmental and health risks and social disparities associated with contaminated land properties, key players in land reuse planning and policy, and redevelopment techniques to improve community health. Course participants will receive an EHLR Certificate upon completion of all five modules of the program. *Cost: \$25 for NEHA members and \$50 for nonmembers.*

NEHA and FDA National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards Self-Assessment and Verification Audit Workshop (June 26–28)

This workshop is designed to provide participants with an overview of the National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards criteria and an in-depth understanding of the self-assessment and verification audit processes, worksheets, and forms. Participants should be program managers or those directly responsible for conducting program self-assessments and preparing for verification audits. *Cost: \$140 for all registrants.*

NEHA and Climate for Health Ambassador Training (June 28)

NEHA has again partnered with ecoAmerica's Climate for Health to offer this training to build the capacity of environmental health professionals to make a difference in their local climate and health conversation. The training will equip environmental health professionals with knowledge, hands-on experience, and resources to speak and act confidently on climate change and solutions. *Cost: Free, preregistration is required.*

NEHA and NOWRA Taking Septic Systems to the Next Level (June 28)

NEHA has partnered with the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA) to offer this 1-day training. Over the last 20 years, the challenges and solutions related to septic systems have both been on the rise. This course, taught by national academic experts, will discuss key pollutant treatment of nutrients and contaminants of emerging concern, challenging soil and site conditions and related solutions, and management programs for long-term sustainability. *Cost: \$125 for NEHA members and \$175 for nonmembers.*

Private Water Network Workshop: Environmental Health Professional's Guide to Positively Influencing Domestic Well Water Testing Behavior (June 28)

This workshop is designed for environmental health professional working with private drinking water systems. It will feature a combination of presentations and facilitated roundtable discussions on effective resources and innovative approaches to positively influence the well water testing behavior in private well owners. *Cost: Free, preregistration is required.*

The 11 Principles of Leadership (June 28)

The 11 Principles of Leadership is a motivational, inspirational, and educational seminar about leadership and foundational concepts on being the best we can be. It will provide attendees with valuable tools they can use every day to apply or provide purpose, motivation, and direction to daily activities and long-term goals. *Cost: Free for NEHA members and \$100 for nonmembers, preregistration is required.*

Using a Health in All Policy Approach to Addressing Childhood Lead Poisoning (June 28)

This workshop will share the tools and resources developed in collaboration with key stakeholders to address lead in homes. It will include jurisdictions that have used these tools and will share their successes and lessons learned. *Cost: Free, preregistration is required.* 🐾