



# PEHSU NEWS

## October and November 2020



### Region 1: New England PEHSU

#### 2020 Louis Roche Lecturer Award

Alan Woolf, MD, MPH, FAAP, FACMT was awarded the honor of '2020 Louis Roche Lecturer' by the European Association of Poisons Centres & Clinical Toxicologists (EAPCCT). This award has been given to a toxicologist annually since 1998 to members who are deemed to have contributed significantly to both the work and development of the Association and to the field of Clinical Toxicology. Dr Woolf virtually presented *Confronting Emerging Pollutants in the Time of Pandemic* to over 235 members and guests of the EAPCCT on October 13. He compared the COVID-19 pandemic with the Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918-1920. He also discussed the challenges of messaging to both health professionals and the general public about the hazards of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) water contamination during the current existential threat of the pandemic.



**Congratulations Dr Alan Woolf!**

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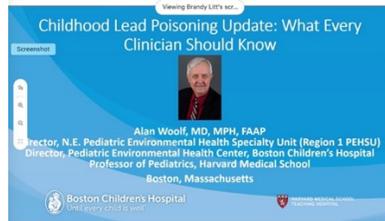


## Region 9: Western States PEHSU

Check out the short-informational video on Wildfire Smoke and Children! The Western States PEHSU partnered with EPA Region 9 to create a short informational video on wildfire smoke exposure to kids. Available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

## Region 1: New England PEHSU CONTINUED

### ***Childhood Lead Poisoning Update: What Every Clinician Should Know Webinar***



On October 28, the New England PEHSU collaborated with the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) to deliver a one-hour free webinar titled, *Childhood Lead and the Pandemic: What Health Professionals Need to Know*. Dr Woolf provided attendees with clinical information and treatment considerations for lead management during COVID-19, as well as examples of unusual cases. Jenna David, Director of Primary Prevention & Infrastructure at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, gave an overview of Massachusetts lead screening mandates, Massachusetts CLPPP resources, and more. There were more than 30 health professionals in attendance consisting of doctors, lead inspectors, community health workers, Master of Public Health Students, and medical interns. The New England PEHSU is look-

ing forward to future collaborations with this very important stakeholder. The webinar was recorded and will be shared as a resource for health professionals who could not attend the live session.

### ***Welcome Bridget!***

In late August, the New England PEHSU welcomed Bridget Tully as the new Patient Experience Representative to coordinate our Pediatric Environmental Health Clinic business at Boston Children's Hospital. Bridget has a bachelor's degree in Human Services and Rehabilitation, with a minor in education from Assumption College. She leaped right into New England PEHSU work and has been a great asset to the team.

### ***Matthew Spence - New Role***

Matthew Spence, MPH was recently given the new title of Health Educator and Project Specialist to reflect his increased involvement with PFAS, COVID-19, and social media outreach. Through his efforts, Mr Spence has continued to build upon relationships with local and state health departments throughout New England, federal partners, and graduate public health programs in the greater Boston area.

## Region 2 PEHSU: Serving New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, & US Virgin Islands

### ***STEMglobal Presentation***

On October 3, PEHSU team members Blean Girma, MPH, Luz Guel, and Joseph Wilson, MHS gave a presentation

to STEMglobal, a high school science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) organization. The presentation titled *Why Environmental Health* provided an introduction to the

## Region 2 PEHSU: Serving New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, & US Virgin Islands Continued

importance of environmental health and justice and a glimpse into the career paths of the presenters.

### American Public Health Association (APHA) Presentation

Region 2 PEHSU team members Ms Girma, Teresa Herrera, and Mr Wilson presented at the American Public Health Association (APHA) virtual conference held October 24-28. These presentations covered the Prescriptions for Prevention project and research studies on heat and children's health.

### Children's Environmental Health (CEH) Day



On October 8, the Region 2 PEHSU collaborated

with the New York State Children's Environmental Health Center (NYSCECH) to celebrate the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Children's Environmental Health Day. This all-day virtual event included a Pediatric Grand Rounds with Aparna Bole, MD, FAAP on *Climate Solutions for Child Health & Equity* and an Instagram Live chat on Colonialism, COVID-19 and Environmental Justice. 270 individuals attended the Zoom event, while the Instagram video had 487 views and 41 participants joining the live. Please visit the CEH Day videos: <https://nyscheck.org/nys-childrens-environmental-health-day-2020/>

### AAP healthychildren.org Articles

How to Choose Safer Personal Care Products: Tips for Families

By Lauren Zajac, MD, MPH, FAAP



Every day, we all use many personal care products such as soaps, lotion, hair products, and toothpaste. Some of these products contain chemicals such as phthalates. These are often added to hold a fragrance or color to the product, for example. However, they may also have unintended health effects, such as

Lauren Zajac, MD, MPH, FAAP wrote two articles for the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) healthychildren.org website. These articles detailed ways to choose safer personal care products and how families can limit their exposure to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

### Links to articles:

[PFAS: Limiting Children's Exposure to "Forever Chemicals"](#)

[How to Choose Safer Personal Care Products: Tips for Families](#)

### October 27: Black Children's Health Working Group Teach-In

Black Child Health Monthly Teach-ins continue in Region 2, with October's topic on "The Praxis of Anti-Racist Public Health Research." Participants learned about how to integrate principles of Critical Race Theory into each part of the Scientific Process. These 15-minute teach-ins on Black Child Health topics are part of the group's overall goal to create a space to bring anti-black, environmental justice, and health equity issues to the forefront of the PEHSU's work and minds.



Region 2 PEHSU Pediatrician Lauren

Follow Region 2 PEHSU on Twitter at @R2PEHSU for information and resources on a variety of reproductive and children's environmental health topics including information, resources, Twitter chats, and other upcoming events.

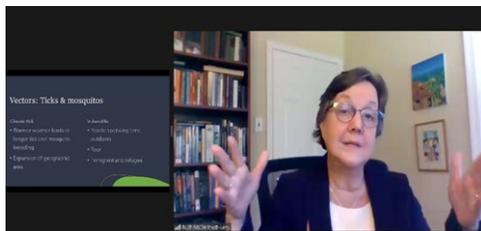
## Region 3: Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment (MACCHE)

### Town Hall Event



Lois Wessel, PhD, RN, MS, FNP was a panelist for a town hall event titled, *Children's Health & the Environment: Asthma and Lead Poisoning*. The event was presented in both English and Spanish. Tracy Grant, the mayor of Edmonston, Maryland co-hosted the town hall on October 15.

### Climate Change Presentations



Ruth McDermott-Levy, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN presented the keynote address for the Sigma Theta Tau International Tri-state (New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania) Consortium on October 4. The topic of the talk was *Climate Changes Health: Have you Changed Your Practice?*

On October 12, Laura Anderko PhD, RN, MS presented on *Climate Change and Reproductive Health*, for the Nurse-Family Partnership organization in Denver, Colorado.

In celebration of Children's Environmental Health Month, Drs McDermott-Levy and Anderko presented on *Climate Change, COVID-19, and Children's Health* on October 14.

### Presentation Focused on Veterans and Their Families



*Common Environmental Exposures Faced by Veterans and their Families: Practical Solutions for Screening these Conditions* was presented to nurses by Dr Anderko for the Jonas Philanthropies annual conference titled, *Mission Homefront: Translating Research into Practice in Veterans Healthcare* hosted by Columbia University on October 16.

### Environmental Toxins Presentation

*Environmental Toxins and Impact on Children's Health* was presented on October 20 by Dr Anderko as part of the Maternal Child Environmental Series for the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments.

## Region 5: Great Lakes Center for Reproductive and Children's Environmental Health

### Local Chicago Partnerships

The Region 5 PEHSU started the COVID-19 project focused on safer disinfectant use by establishing collaborations with two community-based organizations in Chicago: Blacks in Green serv-

ing the Black community on the southwest side, and Telpochcalli Community Education Project (TCEP) serving a Latinx community on the near west side. Both organizations are very enthusiastic about receiving evidence-

## Region 5: Great Lakes Center for Reproductive and Children's Environmental Health Continued

based information about COVID-19 including safe use of disinfectants. Region 5 has already participated in several question and answer sessions with community leaders and have accessed the disinfectant outreach materials posted by other regional PEHSUs. A participating graduate public health student who lives on the southwest side to liaise with Blacks In Green, and the new PEHSU coordinator and public health student Celine Wysgalla, who speaks Spanish, is working with a University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) medi-

cal student on the collaboration with TCEP.

### **Teachers' Union Outreach**

Region 5 was contacted by the children's environmental health liaison at Region 5 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) about working with teachers in Indiana on disinfection safety. Public schools in Indiana are open and some teachers are reporting using their own disinfectants in the classrooms. Susan Buchanan, MD, MPH will work with the teachers' union to provide outreach materials.

## Region 6: Southwest (SW) Center for Pediatric Environmental Health - El Paso

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) held a Mass Casualty Disaster Drill on October 8. The disaster drill aimed to prepare medical personnel for real incidents like the shooting that transpired on August 3, 2019 in El Paso, TX. The disaster drill involved many different personnel, including the Department of Emergency Medicine, West Texas Regional Poison Control, Region 6 PEHSU, Gayle Greve Hunt School Of Nursing (GGHSON), Department of Radiology, TTUHSC El Paso Safety Services, University Medical Center (UMC) Safety Services, UMC Department of Emergency Medicine, Emergency medical technician (EMT) / paramedic students, and volunteers who portrayed the victims. COVID-19 precautions were considered in all aspects

of the simulation. The scenario simulated a dirty bomb explosion at a high school that injured many students and some younger children. The drill highlighted why children are more vulnerable to radiological events and the precautions needed to treat these patients. The training required residents from the Department of Emergency Medicine and Radiology to assign roles and immediately begin treating those acting as "victims". The entire simulation was observed by senior TTUHSC faculty, chief residents, and UMC personnel. A debriefing occurred after the simulation concluded. This drill allowed the Region 6 PEHSU to educate 36 community members and over 75 healthcare members.



Join Region 2 coordinator Teresa Herrera for [Facebook LIVE: Safer Disinfecting and Keeping a Healthy Home During COVID-19](#) on **November 19 at 5:30pm ET!** The event is a partnership with Bronx Rising Together.

## Region 8: Rocky Mountain PEHSU

### **soilShop Testing**

After some months of discussion and work with a specific community in Denver, Region 8 Agency of Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ATSDR), EPA, and the Region 8 PEHSU conducted a socially-distanced soilSHOP in early October. Several participants in the Baker neighborhood in central Denver collected soil samples for XRF testing at the test site. The participants' homes were built between 1886 and 1961 with about half being original, 1886 Baker homes. Each sample was tested 3 times and an average of lead was reported back to the participant. General lead-safe gardening information was provided, and questions answered. Given the goal of a socially-distanced event, another partner, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment agreed to call each participant following the event to discuss the soil testing results and answer additional questions. The XRF averages ranged from a low of 38 up to 333. The highest single reading was 397, all parts per million. The soilSHOP guidance suggests levels below 100 are low and of less concern, levels above 400 are more concerning and considered high

## Region 9: Western States (WS) PEHSU

### **Updated Wildfire Material**

New look, same info! The Western States PEHSU partnered with the International Society for Children's Health and the Environment (ISCHE) to create an updated version of their wildfire infographic. Available in both English and Spanish [here](#).

### **Protecting Children from the Health Effects of Wildfire Smoke**

On October 27, Western States PEHSU scientists spoke on Wildfire Smoke Effects for the American Public Health Association's (APHA) virtual annual meeting and expo.

levels of lead in soil. Most of the Baker neighborhood's results fell in the intermediate 100 to 400 range. This was a pilot activity designed to be mindful of the COVID-19 pandemic. More events are planned for later in this funding year. A brief video of the event can be viewed on the Denver Health [website](#).



*From right to left, Scott Sudweeks and Chris Poulet of Region 8 ATSDR and Mark Anderson from the Region 8 PEHSU; Kim Bartels from Region 8 EPA is expertly taking the picture.*

### **Work with Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program**

The Western States PEHSU was asked to consult on the content of new materials being developed by the Association of State Public Health Nutritionists (ASPHN) for the WIC Program related to cleaning and disinfecting for COVID-19. Vickie Leonard, PhD, RN, NP has also been part of the ongoing ASPHN Safe Use of Disinfectants Project Advisory Group meetings, providing expertise on choosing safer cleaning and disinfecting products, and safer practices around use of these products, especially around children and pregnant women.

## Region 9: Western States PEHSU Continued

### ***Safer Disinfectants and Indoor Air Quality***

The Western States PEHSU has actively been responding to inquiries regarding school reopenings as they relate to safer disinfecting and indoor and outdoor air quality regarding wildfire smoke exposure. Below is a statement from the director of The Berkeley School (TBS) in Berkeley, CA:

“We benefited from PEHSU advice when we reached out to our consulting epidemiologist [...] in our COVID-19 planning, who connected us with Dr Stephanie Holm. Stephanie shared valuable input regarding the impact of smoke on the smallest bodies and lungs, and a confirmed site and methodology for consistent AQI tracking through [airnow.gov](https://airnow.gov)

smoke and fire map, along with the use of a qualified sensor with correction factors nearest our location. Her advice helped us update to a clear and consistent policy to support parenting adults and their understanding of what to expect from the school, and our decision-making process regarding AQI and children's activities—whether school would be in session, or move indoors and what would trigger those shifts. Additionally, Stephanie confirmed the MERV-13 filters we had already upgraded to in our environmental engineering improvements for the current climate. It's always edifying to receive additional affirmation in our practices in this constant juggle through the ever-changing information and challenges. Gone are the days of just teaching school!”

## Region 10: Northwest PEHSU

### ***Presentation***

The Northwest PEHSU's Reproductive and Pediatric Environmental Medicine Specialist, Sheela Sathyanarayana, MD, MPH, FAAP presented *Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals and Childhood Obesity* at the September 2020 Collaborative on Health and the Environment in Washington (CHE-WA) meeting. The presentation discussed potential physiologic pathways for endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDC) and addressed how they contribute to the development of obesity and diabetes in children and the benefits of preventing EDC exposures. Since 2007, CHE-WA has met to explore the emerging science on children's environmental health issues. In addition, CHE-WA meetings are opportunities for representatives from government agencies and NGOs, and others to network and collaborate. The Northwest PEHSU continues to coordinate these meetings.

### ***Interagency Teamwork on Elemental Mercury Exposure Case***

A pre-teen child from Eastern Washington discovered a mason jar full of elemental mercury in a barn on the rental property and brought the jar inside the main house. Coincidentally, two days later a County Health Department employee was at the house for a lead home visit when they found the jar, confiscated it, and immediately notified the EPA National Response Center (NRC). The NRC quickly deployed an On-Scene Coordinator and several Superfund Technical Assistance and Response Team (START) contractors to perform a contamination assessment and clean up. They found many visible beads of mercury and high mercury vapor readings (35,000 ng/m<sup>3</sup> upon arrival) in the children's bedrooms.

After the jar was confiscated, the child's parent contacted the Washington (WA) Poison Control Center (PCC) because the child disclosed that they had

## Region 10: Northwest PEHSU Continued

also ingested an unknown amount of the elemental mercury. The child was brought to a hospital for evaluation. They were asymptomatic and routine labs were within normal limits. The emergency department provider contacted the WA PCC for guidance on medical management. Blood mercury level was 49.3 mcg/L and an abdominal x-ray showed multiple areas of radiodensity. It was decided that

### Publications

#### Region 1

**Title:** Lead exposure and association with angiogenic factors and hypertensive disorders of pregnancy

**PEHSU Affiliated Authors:** Alan Woolf, MD, MPH, FAAP, FACMT, Marissa Hauptman, MD, MPH, FAAP and Blair Wylie, MD, MPH

**Summary:** Katherine Johnson, MD with faculty from the Region 1 PEHSU led a study of 102 pregnant women. The study found that lead exposure was not found to be an important contributor to an elevated angiogenic factor

**Access the article:** [https://authors.elsevier.com/sd/article/S2210-7789\(20\)30103-3](https://authors.elsevier.com/sd/article/S2210-7789(20)30103-3)

### Upcoming Events

**Disinfection/Sterilization: A Primer With A Focus on Use in Healthcare Facilities**

**Presented by:** David Weber, MD

**Date:** December 9, 3:00-4:00pm E.T.

**Registration:** <https://bit.ly/3nCGAp2>

**About:** Learn about the properties of the ideal disinfectants in a health care setting.

chelation therapy was not indicated, and the child was discharged. After discharge, the child's primary care provider contacted the Northwest PEHSU for follow-up recommendations. Because of the excellent communication between agencies that took place, the Northwest PEHSU was already aware of the situation, and prepared to provide appropriate guidance.

#### Region 3

**Title:** Sustaining a Nurse-Led Community Partnership to Promote Environmental Justice (EJ)

**PEHSU Affiliated Author:** Laura Anderko, PhD, RN, MS

**Summary:** The Westlawn Partnership for a Healthier Environment (WPHE) was formed over a decade ago to identify, prioritize, and address environmental health (EH) concerns in low-income, African American, urban neighborhood, which faces a disproportionate burden of EH risks. WPHE's efforts have resulted in significant local, state, and national policy impacts to promote environmental justice implementing Healthy Homes, Healthy Day Cares, and safe bicycling programs.

**Access the article:** <https://doi.org/10.1111/phn.12820>

### World Children's Day is November 20

To commemorate World Children's Day and raise visibility of environmental health issues, APHA's Children's Environmental Health (CEH) Committee has resources that can be shared:

["Protecting Children's Health from Climate Change"](#) (fact sheet) and [The Impact of Climate on Child Health](#)" (Pediicast episode)

Suggestions for content? Please email Isabel Montoya at [imontoya@aap.org](mailto:imontoya@aap.org)

*This material was supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and funded (in part) by the cooperative agreement award number 5 NU61TS000296-02-00 from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).*

*Acknowledgement: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) supports the PEHSU by providing partial funding to ATSDR under Inter-Agency Agreement number DW-75-95877701. Neither EPA nor ATSDR endorse the purchase of any commercial products or services mentioned in PEHSU publications.*