Chair’s Chatter  
Friday, October 29, 2021

In a little noticed, but important action yesterday, the CDC announced that the blood lead reference value for children has been lowered from 5 µg/dL to 3.5 µg/dL. The BLRV is intended to identify children with higher levels of lead in their blood compared to most children, based on the 97.5th percentile of the blood lead level (BLL) distribution in U.S. children ages 1–5 years. This change reflects the substantial improvements in reducing lead exposures, but also highlights the continuing risk from any lead exposure. We are proud of the role our community has had in identifying and reducing this hazard.

Many from our EH community had fun at our hybrid trivia event on Wednesday evening. Congratulations to first place Team Sublime (Francine Laden, Sheila Tripathy, and Melissa Curran), second place Team Superb (Maitreyi Mazumdar, Shuxin Dong, and Nancy Long Sieber), and third place Team Wonderful (Frank Speizer, Kyle Colonna, and Kaitlin Breen). Winners will get department swag and, more importantly, bragging rights. It was a delightful way to spend some time and have fun with colleagues!

Don’t forget the 24th annual John B. Little symposium this afternoon, Friday, October 29 from 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm ET. This year’s theme is COVID-19: Transformative Discoveries and Emerging Research Frontiers. You can find more information and still register here.

We are looking forward to the Planetary Health Colloquium next Wednesday, November 3, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm ET. Professor Caroline Buckee will discuss the Drivers of Malaria in Guyana: The Impact of Gold Mining, with commentary by Dr. Sanna Sokolow. Zoom: https://harvard.zoom.us/j/95261001534

Please join me in congratulating Lilah Rinsky Halivni, who received the 3rd place Early Career prize at the EPICOH 2021. Her presentation was entitled: The complex association of perceived workplace safety, work environment, and national factors with the mental health of aging workers in Europe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In more good news, Gary Adamkiewicz received a new grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to better understand how sensors and educational models can be used to promote individual actions to address indoor environmental hazards in a randomized control trial in Dorchester. The study will use a combination of real-time in-home monitors and exposure assessment methods to estimate indoor exposures to multiple chemical contaminants.

In addition, Adam Haber received the Dean’s Fund for Scientific Advancement: Acceleration Award. The project, entitled Single-cell analysis of the role of nasal tuft cells in allergic asthma, will examine the role of rare epithelial subtypes in immune function in mouse airways. This will help us understand the mechanism of existing biologic therapies such as leukotriene modifiers or the recently developed TSLP inhibitor Tezepelumab, which are increasingly important treatments for asthma.
This year’s Harvard Chan NIEHS Retreat will be held virtually on Wednesday, November 10, 2021. This year’s retreat will discuss the direction of the Center in our competing renewal. Issues such as climate change, planetary health, environmental justice, diversity, equity, and belonging will be considered. NIEHS Director Rick Woychik will be this year’s featured speaker. For more information and to register, please click here.

As world leaders gather starting on Sunday for the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, I would invite them to read the Climate Optimist newsletter put out by our Center for Climate Health and Global Environment (C-CHANGE). The newsletter is a monthly dose of good news about climate change, delivering positive tips and ways to help us stay focused on our shared mission to tackle climate change. You can see the current version and sign up to subscribe here.

Last week we welcomed Sally Bedugnis back as the EH Research Operations Manager. I was delighted to see Marshall Katler visiting this week to help Sally get oriented.

We were happy to hear that Faulkner Francois in our finance team and his wife Nathanaelle welcomed their second baby, Faudnancia Francois, this week. Please join me in congratulating their family!

Witch-ing everyone in the department a spook-tacular Halloween!

Upcoming Events:
Friday, October 29 (1:00 pm – 5:00 pm ET) JBL Research Symposium XXIV
More information:https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/jbl-center/jbl-symposium/

CANCELED: Friday, October 29 (1:10 pm-1:50 pm ET) Harvard Chan Education and Research Center Grand Rounds
Optimize Recovery: Focus on Function, Minimize Work Disability!
J. David Sterns, MD, MPH
Jennifer Christian, MD, MPH, FACOEM
Register: https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cTr1y0pZfyMQZfw

Monday, November 01 (1:10-1:50 pm ET) ERC Seminar Series
Global Occupational Disease, Climate, Pandemics and Planetary Health – Universal Occupational Health Coverage, A Roadmap
Thomas Gassert, MD
Register: https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_863BUThp8TByNa6

Tuesday, November 02 (9:30am- 10:30 am) MIPS Works-in-Progress Seminar
Targeting DNA Repair to Improve Treatment Response to Glioblastoma
Tuesday, November 02 (1:00-2:00 pm ET) Lee Kum Sheung Center for Health and Happiness
Positive Health Interest Group Series: Green Spaces and Health
Peter James, ScD
Kresge 202A

Wednesday, November 03 (1:00-2:00 pm ET) The Planetary Health Colloquium
Drivers of Malaria in Guyana: The Impact of Gold Mining
Caroline Buckee, PhD
Sanna Sokolow, DVM, PhD
Zoom: https://harvard.zoom.us/j/95261001534

Thursday, November 04 (1-2:30 pm ET) Biostats Seminar
Tools and Methods for Understanding Human Behavior and Interactions
Jukka Pekka Onnela, PhD
Register: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/biostatistics/seminars-events/

Friday, November 05 (1:10-1:50 pm ET) Harvard Chan Education and Research Center Grand Rounds
The multi-level complexity associated with the mental health of aging workers in Europe during the COVID-19 pandemic
Lilah Rinsky, MD, PhD, MOecH
Register: https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0MJdBgZfaWFsUMC
Chair’s Chatter  
Friday, October 22, 2021

We are delighted to welcome back to our department Sally Bedugnis as our new Research Operations Manager. Sally replaces Nicole Patterson, and will serve as a resource to all EH lab groups. Sally may be familiar to many of you, as she was in our department from 2007 through 2020, mostly as a lab manager in Les Kobzik’s lab. She has most recently been working in Michael Mina’s lab in Epi. Sally starts with us on Monday, October 25. Her office will be in Building 1, room G3; feel free to stop by and say hello to her!

The 24th Annual John B. Little Symposium will be held next Friday, October 29th. The Symposium is sponsored by the John B. Little (JBL) Center for Radiation Sciences and Environmental Health. Both the Symposium and the Center are named for the late John B. Little, who was the James Steven Simmons Professor of Radiobiology Emeritus, one of the first scholars to characterize problems in public health as interactions between environmental stressors and humans’ response to those stressors. This year’s theme is COVID-19: Transformative Discoveries and Emerging Research Frontiers. The Symposium will feature talks by leading investigators whose research is focused on the biology, virology, and public health science of SARS-CoV-2. You can find more information and register here: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/jbl-center/jbl-symposium/

Remember to RSVP to join us at the Department’s Halloween-inspired games/puzzles and trivia hybrid/virtual event on Wednesday, October 27th from 5:30 pm – 7:30pm. Go to https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_efgDf5AcsTkLTCu to RSVP today.

We have created a new mailbox for submissions to the weekly Chair’s Chatter. Please send your news to eh-chatter@hsph.harvard.edu by 5:00 pm on Wednesdays. We will try to include as many items as possible.

Upcoming Events

Friday, October 22 (1:10-1:50 pm ET) Occupational and Environmental Health Research  
Parental Preconception and Maternal Prenatal Environmental Exposures and Child Behavioral Outcomes  
Jordana Leader, PhD Candidate 
Register: https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eFAuM5MRzFcr08u

Monday, October 25 (3:00– 4:00 pm ET) MEMCARE-SRC Speaker Series  
The Role of Genes and Environmental Toxicants in Parkinson’s Disease: from Pathogenesis to Therapeutic Development  
Kim Tieu, PhD 
Professor and Chair, Department of Environmental Health Sciences, Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work, Florida International University 
More information: https://memcare.sph.harvard.edu/event/memcare-src-speaker-series-2

Tuesday, October 26 (9:30 am – 10:30 am ET) MIPS Works-in-Progress Seminar
Regulation of Airway Smooth Muscle Contractility by Micro RNA’s
Bo Lan, PhD
https://harvard.zoom.us/j/99893080868?pwd=L0M2ZHYvU2t3aFE4YW12YnRsbHlwdz09

Wednesday, October 27 (1:00 pm – 5:00 pm ET) Harvard Chan NIEHS Chalk Talk
Seeing the Forest for the Trees: Novel Approaches to Understanding How Exposure to Nature Influences Human Health
Peter James, PhD
https://harvard.zoom.us/j/93854403999?pwd=L3Nvbml2bnQyT3ZObi9BQmxGN3VZZz09

Wednesday, October 27 (5:30 pm – 7:30 pm ET) Department of Environmental Health Game Night
RSVP: https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_efgDf5AcsTkLTCu

Friday, October 29 (1:00 pm – 5:00 pm ET) JBL Research Symposium XXIV
More information: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/jbl-center/jbl-symposium/

Friday, October 29 (1:10 pm-1:50 pm ET) Harvard Chan Education and Research Center Grand Rounds
Optimize Recovery: Focus on Function, Minimize Work Disability!
J. David Sterns, MD, MPH
Jennifer Christian, MD, MPH, FACOEM
Register: https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cTr1y0pZfyMQZfw
Chair’s Chatter
Friday, October 15, 2021

We were sad to hear of the passing of Eileen Storey. An MPH alumna of the department, Eileen was a dedicated physician and public health advocate; she devoted her career to improving health and safety in the workplace. She was an adjunct EH faculty member, co-teaching our course on the “Epidemiologic Basis of Occupational and Environmental Health Regulations,” and a mentor to our occupational health medicine residents. She came to us after a long and distinguished career at NIOSH, where she was the Chief of the Surveillance Branch, Respiratory Health Division, and at the University of Connecticut Health Center, where she was Professor of Medicine. Dr. Storey was the 2017 recipient of the Harriet Hardy Award from the New England College of Occupational Medicine. You can read her obituary here.

Francine Laden and I recently were named Inaugural Fellows by the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology (ISEE). As Inaugural Fellows, we were interviewed and shared our passion for environmental health and our career paths over these past years. You can view these interviews on the ISEE website here.

Since going remote over 18 months ago, one challenge that the department has faced is continuing to build and strengthen our EH community connectedness. This past Tuesday, the department hosted a virtual ice breaker for 30+ students, postdoctoral fellows, principal research scientists, and faculty to get to know one another in a more informal, small group gathering. Our thanks to everyone who participated and to Kaitlin Breen, Shaun Heller, Francine Laden, and Barbara Zuckerman for organizing and facilitating this event.

Please mark your calendar for the next department event – a Halloween-inspired puzzles, games, and hybrid trivia gathering on October 27th (5:30 pm – 7:30 pm ET). Check your email for additional details coming soon.

Upcoming Events

Friday, October 15 (1:10 pm – 1:50 pm ET) Occupational and Environmental Medicine Grand Rounds
Healthcare Worker Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Considerations in a Pediatric Patient Population
James Medeiros, DO, MPH
Deborah N. Barbeau, MD, PhD, MSPH
Register: https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7WWzBnoC0FBF6l0

Tuesday, October 19 (9:30 am – 10:30 am ET): MIPS Works-In–Progress Seminar
Apoptotic Regulation of COVID 19
Zintis Inde, PhD, Research Fellow
Zoom: https://harvard.zoom.us/j/99893080868?pwd=L0M2ZHYYYvU2t3aFE4YWl2YnRsbH1wdz09
Wednesday, October 20 (2:00 pm – 3:00 pm ET): Harvard Chan-NIEHS Colloquium Series
*Introducing Planetary Health with Some Case Studies of Research in the Field*
Sam Myers, PhD
More details: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/niehs/event/hsph-niehs-colloquium-series-sam-myers/
Zoom: hsph.me/colloquium2021

Wednesday, October 20 (3:00 pm – 5:00 pm ET): Harvard Chan-NIEHS SPARC
*Social Media for Environmental Scientists*
Emily Copeland, Science Communication Network
More details: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/niehs/event/sparc-session/
Zoom: https://harvard.zoom.us/j/91296681878?pwd=Y1hsbDV0RmczSEY2Z2pISTNCaXprQT09
Chair’s Chatter
Friday, October 8, 2021

We are now in our most glorious season here in New England. The weather turns crisp and clear. The leaves are starting to turn to their brilliant fall colors. The fish have been fattening up all summer, and are feeding heavier in preparation for winter locally or their migration south. It is by far my favorite time of year. It is such a treat to have a holiday on Monday, and the forecast of great weather, to give us a chance to enjoy this special time.

Monday is doubly special, in that we will also have the 125th running of the Boston Marathon. This annual event is normally held in mid-April. It was run virtually in 2020 and postponed this spring. Thousands of racers, runners, walkers, and wheel-chair competitors, will start in Hopkinton and race 26.2 miles to Boston. The course, lined by hundreds of thousands of cheering spectators, runs down Beacon Street just a block from our Landmark (401 Park) offices. This is a unique Boston experience, and I suggest you head to the course and cheer on the racers. Please let me know if you are racing, so we can celebrate with you.

As we take a break on Monday, we should also reflect on our mission in public health. Since 2018, in response to calls from the Harvard Chan School Native American Student Organization, the School has designated this holiday as Indigenous Peoples Day. As Dean Williams wrote in announcing that change, we should use this “occasion to raise awareness of historical and continuing injustices faced by indigenous peoples and seek opportunities to partner with these resilient communities in their efforts to improve the health of their populations.”

We were happy to see the announcement of Tamarra James-Todd’s promotion to Mark and Catherine Winkler Associate Professor of Environmental Reproductive Epidemiology. Tamarra’s research centers on the impact of environmental chemicals and metals on maternal cardiometabolic health during pregnancy, the postpartum period, and in the decades following the perinatal period. You can learn more about her work here. Her promotion is a well-deserved acknowledgment of her scientific contributions and her importance to our department and school. Join me in congratulating her!

Congratulations also to Anny Maza who was promoted to Grants and Contracts Manager. Anny has been an integral part of our finance team for seven years. Anny wears many hats and is always willing and able to help when needed. In her new role, she will provide post-award support to the JBL Center Investigators. Thanks for all you do Anny!

In other news, this past week our department welcomed Professor Howard Frumkin as the first speaker of the Planetary Health Colloquium Series. Professor Alan Brandt from the History of Science Department at Harvard University was the meeting discussant. Dr. Frumkin’s talk, Planetary Health: Environmental Health 4.0?, introduced economics and sustainability and their relationships with Planetary Health. A recording of this event can be found here.

Enjoy this long weekend and come back refreshed.
Upcoming Events

Friday, October 08, 1:10 pm – 1:50 pm ET
EOME Grand Rounds
Marissa Hauptman, MD, MPH, Associate Director, Pediatric Environmental Health Center
Environmental Justice: Addressing Lead Exposure in Times of Crisis
Registration is required to join by ZOOM. Pre-register with link below
https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cO6BlMJgPEeFRoq

Tuesday, October 12th, 9:20 am – 10:30 am ET
MIPS Work-in-Progress
Adam Haber, PhD. Tuft Cell Derived Cysteinyl Leukotrienes Mediate Regeneration of Olfactory Neuroepithelia After Allergic Inflammation
Zoom: https://harvard.zoom.us/j/99893080868?pwd=L0M2ZHYvU2t3aFE4YWt2YnRsbHlwdz09

Wednesday, October 13th, 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm ET
Clearing the Air: Why Now Is the Time to Tackle Global Air Pollution
Read More

Thursday, October 14th, 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm ET
Harvard Chan-NIEHS Center, Specific Aims Session
The Harvard Chan-NIEHS Center offers to review your Specific Aims for upcoming grant submissions. For more information please email niehsctr@hsph.harvard.edu
Earlier this week, we caught up with EH alumni from across the globe during the Harvard Chan Alumni Week. Over 40 alumni attended from as far away as Taiwan, Australia, and Singapore, and from classes over each of the past five decades. I was particularly thrilled to see some of my classmates from the mid-1970s. Three of our faculty members Gary Adamkiewicz, Joe Allen, and Carmen Messerlian, gave wonderful overviews of their work. One of the benefits to this Zoom age is that alumni are welcome to participate in our seminars either in real-time or by viewing recorded versions. We also noted that we had added an Alumni News section to our quarterly Environmental Health Newsletter, and many attendees have provided updates on their latest accomplishments. Thank you to all who planned or attended this gathering; we look forward to continued connections with our alumni!

This is the final reminder to submit your own updates for our upcoming Environmental Health Newsletter. To submit your items, please complete the Qualtrics survey here by Monday, October 4th.

While some community members are returning to campus, many are choosing to continue to work from home. Mail is piling up in our mailboxes, and some of it is important. To help ease the burden of sorting mail and dealing with clogged mailboxes, we ask that people who are not regularly on-site suspend the delivery of journals to the School. Instead, please have them mailed directly to your home or cancel your subscriptions. Also, please have your personal mail sent to your home, not to the School. Thank you!

This week, Dr. Giang T. Nguyen, the Executive Director of Harvard University Health Services (HUHS), sent a reminder on ways we can Keep Harvard Healthy. We would like to reiterate that our behaviors matter in protecting ourselves and others. While we can’t yet assume life as usual, with each person’s efforts, we can inch closer to normal. With that in mind, please find tips from HUHS below. And, as always, please continue to check the EH website, COVID Updates: Your Health, Our Tips, for departmental updates.

Much of our work focuses appropriately on the local, personal, cellular, or even molecular scale. Two upcoming events will invite us to view environmental health more broadly. On Wednesday, we will have the first of our Planetary Health Colloquium. Next Wednesday, the Harvard Chan Forum on When Public Health Means Business will have a panel on Clearing the Air: Why Now Is the Time to Tackle Global Air Pollution. See details of these two events below.

Upcoming Events

Friday October 1
1:10 – 1:50 pm
Seminar in Occupational and Environmental Health Research
Joseph G. Allen, MPH, DSc, CIH
Associate Professor of Exposure Assessment Science; Director, Harvard Health Buildings Program; Deputy Director, Harvard Chan Education and Research Center for Occupational Safety and Health.
Buildings that Make Us Sicks, Or Keep Us Well: A Paradigm Shift to Combat Indoor Respiratory Infection
Zoom registration: https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b16fsPsrDezCTYO
Room Kresge 502

Monday October 4
12:00 pm
The Mahalingaiah Lab
Lynae Brayboy, PhD
Adjunct Professor Alpert Medical School.
Dysfunctional MDR-1 Disrupts Mitochondrial Homeostasis in the Oocyte-A Model for Diminished Ovarian Cancer
Zoom registration: https://harvard.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYufu6hqj8sH9OMmLT4sWp74J_5RrKNP4J

Tuesday, October 5
09:30 – 10:30 am
MIPS Work-in-Progress Seminars
Scott T. Weiss PhD Department of Environmental Health
Vitamin D, Chromosome 17q and the origins of Asthma
https://harvard.zoom.us/j/99893080868?pwd=L0M2ZHYvU2t3aFE4YW12YnRsbHlwdz09

Wednesday, October 6
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm
Planetary Health Colloquium
Planetary Health: Environmental Health 4.0
Presenter: Howard Frumkin MD, DrPH, Professor Emeritus, University of Washington School of Public Health, Senior Vice President, Trust for Public Land
Discussant: Allan Brandt, PhD, Amalie Moses Kass Professor of the History of Medicine. Professor of the History of Science, Department of the History of Science, Department of Global Health and Social Medicine
Zoom: https://harvard.zoom.us/j/94929936993

Wednesday, October 13th
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
Clearing the Air: Why Now Is the Time to Tackle Global Air Pollution Read More