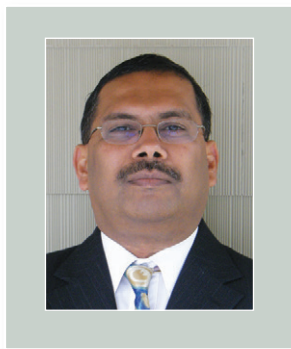


► PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Larry A. Ramdin, MPH, MA,
REHS/RS, CP-FS, HHS, CHO

What We Did Over the Last Year and Looking Forward to the New Year

Happy New Year, 2026!

I extend my warmest wishes to everyone for a bright and prosperous year ahead.

As we begin a new year, we look toward creating a better future—building on our successes and learning from our challenges. We continuously strive to do better and achieve more. I would like to take this opportunity to review the major accomplishments of the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) over the past year.

Strengthening Our Presence in the Americas

The Americas comprise 55 countries, territories, and dependencies. Of these, 20—including Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory—are Spanish-speaking. As part of our strategic effort to enhance our regional presence in 2025, NEHA made its web content and the *Journal of Environmental Health* available in both English and Spanish.

Important Publications Released

We released a new guide, *Pillars of Governmental Environmental Public Health*, which is the culmination of extensive research and the first publication of its kind (Bare et al., 2025). It outlines key areas of practice and responsibility, and provides evidence-based recommendations for building and sustaining effective environmental public health programs at the local level. The guide identifies 11 primary (core) and 4 secondary functions of local governmental environmental health practice.

We remain committed to ensuring that environmental health is recognized and valued.

We also published *Modernizing Data Systems in Environmental Public Health: A Blueprint for Action*. The foreword describes the blueprint as follows:

It serves as a practical and strategic resource for EPH [environmental public health] professionals who seek to enhance their data understanding, capabilities, and data infrastructure. Organized by thematic sections, the guide provides foundational principles, actionable strategies, real-world case studies, and tools to support jurisdictions of all sizes and capacities in making significant progress toward modern, resilient data systems. (Ong & Mackey, 2025, p. iii)

This guide is yet another example of our long-term work to provide tools and resources that help environmental health practitioners use data to improve systems and demonstrate the value of environmental health programs.

Expanding Education, Outreach, and Visibility

Our Environmental Health Grand Rounds addressed timely and relevant topics for

environmental health practitioners (www.neha.org/eh-grand-rounds). These virtual seminars had high registration numbers and reached a global audience, providing practical tools to strengthen skills and meet professional challenges.

NEHA staff were also cited in more than 20 news and magazine articles, offering expert guidance on environmental health issues—reflecting our reputation as respected scientists and researchers (www.neha.org/News-Announcements).

Our Online Community space continues to serve as the go-to forum for practitioners seeking advice and support from their peers (<https://community.neha.org/home>).

Record-Breaking Student Support

One of our proudest achievements was awarding \$22,500 in scholarships through the NEHA/American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS) Environmental Health Scholarships (www.neha.org/scholarships). In total, we gave out six scholarships to three undergraduate and three graduate students. This amount represents the largest scholarship award in our history and reflects sound financial stewardship.

To sustain and expand support for future environmental health professionals, we launched the NEHA 1,000 Challenge to recruit 1,000 individual donors to strengthen our Scholarship and Endowment Funds. Please join us in supporting our students and our profession—no contribution is too small, and recurring donations are welcome (www.neha.org/donate).

Advancing Food Protection Programs

In partnership with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), we helped administer the NEHA/FDA Retail Flexible Funding Model (RFFM) Grant Program (www.neha.org/retail-grants), which provided 313 jurisdictions with funding for 606 projects to advance the FDA's Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards.

Looking Ahead to 2026

In the coming year, we will continue advocating for environmental health by supporting practitioners, partnering with federal and state agencies, and collaborating with private sector organizations that play a vital role in our field.

We look forward to:

- Publishing a scholarly research article on the health benefits of governmental environmental public health
- Creating and delivering a virtual Retail Program Standards Symposium

- Releasing an asynchronous Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian (REHS/RS) credential exam preparation course

We remain committed to ensuring that environmental health—the second-largest public health practice area—is recognized and valued.

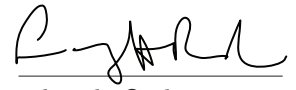
Reflections

We achieved much over the past year, despite challenges and uncertainties. Through resilience, planning, dedicated staff, and strong leadership, we continued to represent environmental health with excellence.

In Closing

As we honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in January, we remember his words in *A Look to the Future* from September 2, 1957: “In order to look to the future, it is often necessary to get a clear picture of the past. In order to know where we are going, it is often necessary to see from whence we have come.”

Let these words guide us as we honor our past and look toward a promising future. Happy 2026! 🌸



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References

- Bare, G., Kim, T.N., Hedberg, C.W., Dutra, N., Walker, C., & Dyjack, D. (2025). *Pillars of governmental environmental public health: A guide to scalable environmental public health programs*. National Environmental Health Association. <https://pubs.neha.org/2025-pillars-of-eh/>
- Ong, S., & Mackey, A. (2025). *Modernizing data systems in environmental public health: A blueprint for action*. National Environmental Health Association. <https://pubs.neha.org/modernizing-data-systems/>

Did You Know?

You can learn what NEHA has done over the past decade through our Annual Reports. Each report maps out yearly achievements toward our mission to build, sustain, and empower an effective environmental health workforce. Check them out at www.neha.org/annual-reports.



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