# VOL. 22 | ISSUE 1 THE PREVENTATIVE MEASURE

## **WINTER 2021**

Triannual Newsletter of the National Capital Area Environmental Health Association



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Rapid Response Team, Fairfax County HD



### **2021 BOARD**

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DC Representative Lanita Carpenter

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#### **President's Message**

In preparing for this message, I reviewed several past "Message from the President" columns, reminiscing my time with this Association. First as a regular member, then volunteering to serve on an Awards Committee and then moving onto the Board as the VA Representative and then onto Secretary. Now as President, I aim to keep this Association going through these unprecedented times.

I would like to recognize, Kristen Pybus, our Past President who has faithfully and graciously served as a member of the NCAEHA Board for the past 12 years. She first held the position of Virginia Representative for two years, then she was our Secretary for two years, before becoming our VP of Programs & Professional Advancement for four years and then finally our President for the past four years.

I would like to thank Joe Morin with Amtrak for accepting to fill our vacant MD Representative position and Lanita Carpenter with DC Health to fill our vacant DC Representative position. It takes an entire board for this organization to run smoothly and we're looking for some additional members to join us! We need to fill the vacant VP of Programs & Professional Development position and we would like to start training a back-up Treasurer for the important tasks of doing our taxes and maintaining our 501c3 non-profit status for the next two years. It is a great opportunity to learn and grow professionally!

You may have noticed that we did not have a winter conference this year due to many of us being extremely busy with Health Department vaccination clinics. We plan to still offer two educational conferences this year as well as having an awards ceremony.

This brings us to our next educational conference, to be held virtually, Monday, May 3, 2021. It will be free to all our current members. You may find the agenda in an upcoming email and visit our website at www.ncaeha.org to renew your membership today!

Feel free to contact me with any questions or suggestions. I look forward to serving you and hope to see you all later in the year!

Best regards, Julia Balsley NCAEHA President





NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION | AFFILIATE OF NEHA SERVING DC, MD, VA



### **BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP:**

- Be a part of a local association in the DC, MD, and VA area that is focused on environmental health (EH)
  - Network with other local EH professionals in academia, industry, government, private sector, and other areas
- Advance your career by pursuing a credential or certification with our discounted annual courses like the REHS, CP-FS, CPO, and more
- Gain more knowledge and/or earn up to 15 Continuing Education hours per year by attending our nearby Educational Conferences
  - Enjoy a good time with your EH colleagues and build new connections at our social events
  - Recognize an EH professional by nominating them for an award or scholarship
- Pursue local EH employment opportunities with easy accessibility through our announcements
  - Stay updated through our newsletter, website, and social media and announcements on other events, trainings, webinars, and more

#### Memberships expired on December 31, 2020. Regular Membership Renewal: \$20.00 Student and Silver Membership Renewal: \$5.00

Membership Renewal may be completed online at **www.ncaeha.org** by simply logging onto your profile and click the RENEW button! Payments are accepted online via credit card.

#### **President: Julia Balsley**



Julia Balsley graduated from Salisbury University in 1998 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Health. That summer she began her career as an Environmental Sanitarian with the State of Maryland for the Anne Arundel County Health Department in the Community & Housing Protection Program. In 2001 she became an Environmental Health Specialist with Arlington County's Public Health Division. In the Environmental Health Program, she performs food, hotel and water recreational facility inspections. She leads the Water Recreation Facilities Program and reviews architectural plans of all these establishments for code requirements. Julia first joined NCAEHA in 2000. She has served as the Virginia Representative, Secretary and has sat on the By-Laws, Elections & Awards Committees. She maintains NEHA's REHS/RS credential and has a Lead Risk Assessor License from the Commonwealth of Virginia. In 2015 she was presented the Jerrold M. Michael Award in recognition of her dedicated service to Environmental Health.

#### Secretary: Kendra Washington

Kendra first began her professional career as a Sanitarian with the Charles County Department of Health in 2014, where she covered various duties including overseeing the Transient Non-Community water sampling program, rabies control, and food safety. From 2016 to 2020 she worked as an Environmental Health Specialist Sr. for the City of Alexandria, covering tourist lodging, aquatic health and food safety. Currently holds a position at the Arlington County Public Health Division as An Environmental Health Specialist. She is a proud graduate of Ohio University, with a bachelor's degree in environmental health science, and maintains the REHS, CP-FS, CPO and Virginia lead risk assessor certificate.



#### **MD** Representative: Joseph Morin



Joe began his food safety career as a Veterinary Food Specialist in the US Army between 1992 and 2000. He has worked in local Public Health since 2001, and experience as a Sanitarian, Emergency Preparedness Planner, and a Quality Manager/PHAB Accreditation Coordinator. For the past 6 years, he has worked for Amtrak as a Senior Public Health Specialist for the Central Region and is currently the Senior Manager of Public Health. Joe received his Bachelor's of Science in Environmental Science and his Master's of Public Administration, with a focus in Environmental Policy from Southern Illinois University. He holds environmental health credentials with NEHA and the states of Maryland & Illinois.

#### **DC Representative: Lanita Carpenter**

Lanita is a sanitarian with the District of Columbia Department of Health's Food Safety Division (FSHISD). She is originally from Orlando, Florida, where she enlisted into the US Air Force as a Public Health Technician, conducting food safety inspections and doing public health work abroad and stateside for 7 years. She obtained her Bachelor of Science Degree in Health Sciences with a concentration in Environmental health Studies from Trident University, and her Masters in Business Administration with a concentration in public administration from Strayer University. Lanita comes with a wealth of experience as a Virginia Department of Health standardized Environmental Health Specialist previously serving Arlington, County Virginia.



# First Month of COVID-19 Vaccine Safety Monitoring — United States, December 14, 2020–January 13, 2021

Weekly / February 26, 2021 / 70(8);283-288

Julianne Gee; Paige Marquez; John Su; Geoffrey M. Calvert; Ruiling Liu; Tanya Myers; Narayan Nair; Stacey Martin; Thomas Clark; Lauri Markowitz; Nicole Lindsey; Bicheng Zhang; Charles Licata; Amelia Jazwa; Mark Sotir; Tom Shimabukuro

Two coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccines are currently authorized for use in the United States. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine on December 11, 2020, and for the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine on December 18, 2020; each is administered as a 2-dose series. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices issued interim recommendations for Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines on December 12, 2020 (1), and December 19, 2020 (2), respectively; initial doses were recommended for health care personnel and long-term care facility (LTCF) residents (3). Safety monitoring for these vaccines has been the most intense and comprehensive in U.S. history, using the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), a spontaneous reporting system, and vsafe,\* an active surveillance system, during the initial implementation phases of the COVID-19 national vaccination program (4). CDC conducted descriptive analyses of safety data from the first month of vaccination (December 14, 2020-January 13, 2021). During this period, 13,794,904 vaccine doses were administered, and VAERS received and processed<sup>†</sup> 6,994 reports of adverse events after vaccination, including 6,354 (90.8%) that were classified as nonserious and 640 (9.2%) as serious.§ The symptoms most frequently reported to VAERS were headache (22.4%), fatigue (16.5%), and dizziness (16.5%). Atotal of 113 deaths were reported to VAERS, including 78 (65%) among LTCF residents; available information from death certificates, autopsy reports, medical records, and clinical descriptions from VAERS reports and health care

providers did not suggest any causal relationship between COVID-19 vaccination and death. Rare cases of anaphylaxis after receipt of both vaccines were reported (4.5 reported cases per million doses administered). Among persons who received Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, reactions reported to the v-safe system were more frequent after receipt of the second dose than after the first. The initial postauthorization safety profiles of the two COVID-19 vaccines in current use did not indicate evidence of unexpected serious adverse events. These data provide reassurance and helpful information regarding what health care providers and vaccine recipients might expect after vaccination.

VAERS is an existing national passive surveillance system for adverse events after vaccination that accepts reports from health care providers, vaccine manufacturers, and the public. Reported signs and symptoms are coded using Medical Dictionary for Regulatory Activities (MedDRA) terminology.¶ Serious adverse events are followed up by the VAERS program to obtain additional information, including medical records, information from health care providers, and, in the case of death, death certificates and autopsy reports (4).

V-safe is a safety monitoring system established by CDC specifically for the COVID-19 vaccination program. V-safe participants voluntarily self-enroll and receive smartphone text messages providing hyperlinks to web surveys.\*\* During the first week after vaccination, enrollees complete daily surveys asking about local injection site and systemic reactions. Enrollees are asked if they missed work, were unable to perform normal daily activities, or received care from a medical professional because of reported symptoms or heath conditions. Enrollees who report seeking medical care are contacted, and a VAERS report is completed if clinically indicated. Persons who do not report their sex as male are asked about pregnancy status at time of vaccination (initial survey) and about a positive pregnancy test result (3and 6-week surveys); reported pregnancies are followed up through the v-safe pregnancy registry.††

CDC conducted descriptive analyses of data from VAERS and v-safe during December 14, 2020-January 13, 2021, a period when the first and second doses of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and the first dose of Moderna vaccine were administered. Because LTCF staff members were vaccinated at LTCF facilities, residents of LTCFs were presumptively identified by restricting examination of VAERS reports to adults aged  $\geq$  65 years with a documented vaccination at an LTCF. To ensure that LTCF residents with serious adverse events were identified. manual review was conducted of all reports of serious adverse events among those vaccinated in LTCFs, regardless of vaccine recipient's age. Administered vaccine doses were reported to CDC.§§ These activities were reviewed by CDC and are consistent with applicable federal law and CDC policy.¶¶ All analyses were conducted using SAS software (version 9.4; SAS Institute).

During December 14, 2020–January 13, 2021, a total of 13,794,904 COVID-19 vaccine doses were administered in the United States; 8,436,863 (61.2%) doses were administered to women. VAERS received 6,994 reports of COVID-19–

associated adverse events during this period. Among all reports, 6,354 (90.8%) were classified as nonserious and 640 (9.2%) as serious, including 113 (1.6%) deaths. The median age of vaccine recipients in VAERS reports was 42 years (range = 15-104 years); 5,505 (78.7%) reports were submitted for adverse events in women. Headache (22.4%), fatigue (16.5%), and dizziness (16.5%) were the most frequently reported symptoms after vaccination with either vaccine (Table 1). Sixty-two reports of anaphylaxis have been confirmed, 46 (74.2%) after receipt of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and 16 (25.8%) after receipt of the Moderna vaccine.

#### Discussion

After administration of 13.8 million doses of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines to the U.S. population during the first month of the vaccination program, the postauthorization safety profiles for both vaccines are reassuring. Most (90.9%) VAERS reports were for nonserious events and involved local and systemic symptoms; transient local and systemic reactions were also frequently reported in v-safe. Reports of anaphylaxis have been observed after administration of both vaccines (5). The occurrence of anaphylaxis after receipt of COVID-19 vaccines during the analytic period, 4.5 cases per million doses administered, is within the range reported after receipt of inactivated influenza vaccine (1.4 per million), pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (2.5 per million), and live attenuated herpes zoster vaccine (9.6 per million); effective treatments for anaphylaxis exist (6).

VAERS received 113 reports of death after COVID-19 vaccinations; two thirds of these deaths occurred among LTCF residents. All-cause mortality is high in LTCF populations because underlying medical conditions are common. Based on expected rates of background mortality, among the approximately 1 million LTCF residents vaccinated in the first month of the U.S. COVID-19 vaccination program, approximately 7,000 coincidental, temporally associated deaths from all causes would be expected during the

analytic period (7). In contrast, VAERS received 78 reports of death after COVID-19 vaccination in LTCF residents, and approximately one half were in residents who were in hospice or who had a do-not-resuscitate status. Reported causes of death in LTCF residents after COVID-19 vaccination are consistent with expected all-cause mortality in this population. Among deaths in persons with available death certificate and autopsy information who were not LTCF residents, causes of death were consistent with background all-cause mortality and did not indicate any unexpected pattern that might suggest a causal relationship with vaccination (8).

Findings from v-safe monitoring for both vaccines indicate substantial reactogenicity. More reactogenicity was reported after the second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech than the first, particularly on the day after vaccination (data on second dose of Moderna vaccine were not available because of later availability and the dosing interval). These findings are similar to those from clinical trials from both manufacturers, in which injection site pain, fatigue, headache, and myalgia were most frequently reported, with a higher frequency after the second dose in comparable age groups (9,10). V-safe's rapid collection of experiences from vaccinated persons provides valuable information that health care providers can use to counsel vaccine recipients about common reactions and what to expect after vaccination.\*\*\* V-safe will be able to provide information on vaccination during pregnancy through follow-up in the v-safe pregnancy registry.

The findings in this report are subject to at least three limitations. First, VAERS analyses are based on passive surveillance, and reporting biases are possible, both from underreporting because of lack of awareness or compliance with reporting requirements as well as from stimulated reporting related to increased awareness. Second, LTCF residents might have been undercounted because the search strategy for identifying LTCF residents relied primarily on vaccination facility documentation. Because of challenges in distinguishing LTCF staff members from LTCF residents aged ≤65 years, only serious VAERS reports were reviewed among those aged ≤65 years who were vaccinated in LTCFs. Finally, v-safe is a voluntary self-enrollment program requiring smartphone access, and all vaccination locations might not have offered equal access to v-safe enrollment materials to vaccine recipients; therefore, information from v-safe might not be representative or generalizable.

Mass vaccination with highly effective vaccines is critical to controlling the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the speed of COVID-19 vaccine development and deployment, there have been concerns among the public about the safety of these new vaccines. In response to these concerns, the U.S. government has implemented the most comprehensive vaccine safety monitoring program in its history. Cases of anaphylaxis after receipt of both authorized vaccines have been observed, though rarely; anaphylaxis rates are comparable with those reported after receipt of other vaccines. No unexpected patterns of reactions or other safety concerns have been identified during early monitoring. CDC and FDA will continue to monitor the safety of COVID-19 vaccines to inform vaccination policy and to maintain public confidence.

Adverse events that occur after COVID-19 vaccination should be reported to VAERS. Providers are encouraged to promote v-safe enrollment and are required under EUA to report to VAERS vaccination administration errors, serious adverse events, cases of multisystem inflammatory syndrome, and cases of COVID-19 that result in hospitalization or death after COVID-19 vaccination.††† These initial findings should provide reassurance to health care providers and to vaccine recipients and promote confidence in the safety of COVID-19 vaccines.

Corresponding author: Julianne Gee, jgee@cdc.gov. CDC COVID-19 Response Team; 2Food and Drug Administration, Silver Spring, Maryland.

# Congratulations to our **2020/2021 Awards & Scholarship Winners!**



#### James M. Wordsworth Scholarship: Deborah Brown, EHS II, Fairfax County Health Department

Being an employee within Fairfax County's Health Department has afforded me some amazingly rewarding opportunities to work with the public as well as the environment. One achievement that I am particularly proud of blended the worlds of "public" and the "environment" into what I would call a public health co-operative. I was chosen within the Women, Infants and Children agency, to partner with the Virginia Cooperative Extension program, to become a trained educator of food preparation and nutrition. The Virginia Cooperative Extension Program makes a difference in the lives of an underserved population, SNAP and WIC recipients, by teaching innovative ways for food preparation, effective resource utilization, physical activity and even teaching food sustainability and gardening. With the completion of my training I spear-headed the food demonstrations in the Mount Vernon area for the clients and their families receiving WIC benefits. I was able to turn nutrition education classes into fun, hands-on experiences that gave families the information necessary to make healthier nutrition choices. Since benefits can be limited, it was also important to educate this population on the significance of learning how to properly shop for food items, and to create meal plans or recipes that utilized all provided items. I developed imitation recipes from famous fast-food restaurants that could be re-created in healthy ways, that also utilized their food benefits. My communication also expanded to the office formerly located on the Fort Belvoir military base, where a group of clients participated in the WIC program and chose gardening as a means of feeding their families. I educated them on shopping at local farmers markets and even taking advantage of the Farmer's Market truck that was available at the South County government building certain days of the week. I was so honored to be a part of such a great initiative and enjoyed the chance to educate the community on healthy food choices that could also have a positive impact on the environment as well!

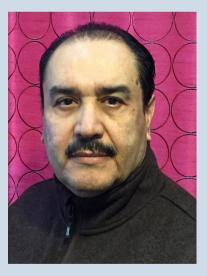
#### Dedicated Service Award: Santos Ayala, EHS, Arlington County Community Health & Protection Bureau

After retiring from the Army as Environmental Health Compliance Officer, Mr. Ayala joined Arlington County Government as a Code Enforcement Inspector, where he proactively investigated and responded to complaints of Housing Code Violations.

After three years with the Building Department Inspection Services he was promoted to an Environmental Health Specialist (EHS) within the Department of Human Services Public Health Division. Shortly thereafter he became a member of NCAEHA. I joined Arlington County as an EHS a little time after that and he encouraged me to join the organization. He has been a long-term member of the NCAEHA and has presented at several of the Educational Conferences.

For the past 22 years his routine work has included plan review, inspections of hotels, restaurants and water recreation facilities. As a licensed Lead Risk Assessor with the State he has been invaluable with performing lead risk assessments of children who have been tested with elevated blood lead levels in Arlington, Alexandria and Prince William jurisdictions.

He was instrumental in the creation of the Mobile Unit Inspection Program within the Environmental Health Program. He has great communication skills, helping with Spanish translation with the Community and the entire Public Health Department, ensuring the health and safety of all. An excellent team player he is currently on the COVID Public Health Response Team Operations Section performing risk assessments of close contacts of cases through interviews and investigation.



# 2020/2021 Awards and Scholarship Winners!

#### NCAEHA Industry Award: Farmers Restaurant Group



Farmers Restaurant Group has been granted the Industry Award this year based on all the great things that they have been able to accomplish and contributed to promoting Health Safety and Sanitation throughout our seven restaurants.

One of the restaurants located in DC called "Founding Farmers DC", received the Directors Award this past September of 2019 which is a food safety merit award of excellence. Another restaurant under Farmers Restaurant group, located in Fairfax county Virginia called "Founding Farmers Reston Station", received the STAMP program award this January of 2020, which is an enrollment program aimed at assessing and promoting proactive food safety practices and recognizing food service establishments for their food safety management systems. As well as our Executive Chef Jonathan Capo, who was awarded the active managerial control award.

Throughout the seven restaurants, we conduct monthly food safety and sanitation inspections, we do yearly manager food safety testing for all of the managers under Prometric. We have implemented written policies, and do constant trainings in both English and Spanish for all of our team members in order to ensure that we are in compliance with out state and local guidelines, as well as the current Food code.

Since mid-March Farmers Restaurant Group, has also been a pioneer in the industry these past few months of the covid-19 crisis in these challenging times. We have adapted our operations and offerings, connected with new and existing partners, and continued to look for new ways to serve and uplift our friends and neighbors by:

- Delivering over 3,800 meals to local area hospitals and first responders through partnerships with Feed the Fight, as well as individual donations.
- Delivering over 300 meals to housebound elders and those in need across DC and Northern Virginia through our partnership with Last Call for Food.
- Providing almost 2,000 individually packaged and freshly prepared meals per week to DC's most vulnerable residents through our partnership with World Central Kitchen.
- Using flour donated through our North Dakota farmers and former Senator Heidi Heitkamp to make and donate 200 loaves of bread to DC Central Kitchen.
- Supplying over 1,200 gallons of our Founding Spirits Hand Sanitizer to hospitals, first responders, healthcare workers, and others across our communities.
- Offering 50% off our restaurant To Go menus for first responders.
- Opening a Market & Grocery in 6 of their 7 restaurants with contact-free curbside pick-up and delivery.



#### Environmental Health Innovation Award; Alexandria Environmental Health Team

The Alexandria Health Department's Environmental Health team, like many other EH programs were faced with changing the way they operate when the COVID-19 pandemic started. Realizing that businesses were going to need help navigating the reopening processes they sprang into action, creating the ALX Promise program. EH Manager Rachel Stradling, worked with AHD leadership, City partners, Visit Alexandria, and local restaurant and business associations, to get their plan and the program rolling. Then

other members of the EH team, Safwaan Islam, Jasmine McNally, Erin Miller, and Marcella Sikon worked to create checklists and PowerPoint presentations to utilize during training sessions for businesses. Throughout the program the entire EH team, including Amanda Barto, Amanda Coletti, Jennifer Lineback, Tiffany Johnson-Wiggins, Leslie Valenzuela and Kendra Washington all played a part either conducting trainings, delivering materials to businesses, or updating and reviewing materials for the program.

The ALX Promise program itself helps businesses safely reopen and remain open during the pandemic. When customers see the ALX Promise shield displayed on a businesses they know that the business has committed to higher safety standards for employees and customers than the minimum rules required by law for all businesses. Those businesses participate in training with an AHD Environmental Health Specialist on the requirements to reopen their business. They train all their employees on the safety measures needed for a safe reopening. And they submit a completed checklist, training record and pledge commitment to ensure the safety of its employees and staff. Then they agree to follow all future applicable health guidance as Alexandria enters new phases of reopening. New checklists and trainings are completed as new changes. This program, as of date, has had over 420 businesses sign up for the program, representing restaurants, retail stores, tour guides, office buildings, entertainment venues, hotels, and more. And more than 200 have fully completed all aspects of the program.

# 2020/2021 Awards and Scholarships Winners!

## **Members of the Year**

DC: Mouhaman Kola, DOEE Attended the 2020 Winter Conference 2020 Virtual Educational Conference, Membership: 2018, 2020

Mouhaman Sani Kola, MS, LEHS, CAPMI Currently work as an Environmental Protection Specialist in the Lead-Safe and Healthy Housing Division for the District Of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment. Prior to joining the Department in June 2017, I was working as an Environmental Compliance Specialist in the Lead Accreditation & Oversight Division for the Maryland Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. I graduated from the University of Maryland University College (UMUC) now University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) in 2009 with a BS, and in 2011 with MS in Environmental Management. I maintain NEHA's membership, Maryland License of Environmental Health Specialist (LEHS), District of Columbia Lead Risk Assessor Certification, and Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM)® issued by the Project Management Institute.





#### MD: Bishaw Woldemariam, PG County Health Department

Attended the 2020 Winter Conference, 2020 Virtual Educational Conference, Membership: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020

VA: (Tie) Chelsea Klatte / Candace Wooden, Arlington County Community Health & Protection Bureau Attended the 2020 Winter Conference, 2020 Virtual Educational Conference, Membership 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020





### NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

ENVIRONMAL HEAV

VIRTUAL SPRING EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

# MAY 3, 2021

FREE for NCAEHA members with an ACTIVE 2021 Membership.
Earn CEU's from your own computer!
Registration available at ncaeha.org/events

#### Announcements

#### Vacant Position: VP of Programs and Professional Development

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN JOINING OUR BOARD? DO YOU HAVE STRONG LEADERSHIP Skills? Are you great at networking and working with others?

CONTACT US AT NCAEHA.PRESIDENT@GMAIL.COM

### Seeking: Assistant Treasurer

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN JOINING OUR BOARD? ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH FINANCES AND RECORD KEEPING? ARE YOU WILLING TO LEARN NEW SKILLS?

CONTACT US AT NCAEHA.PRESIDENT@GMAIL.COM





#### **2021 NCAEHA Board Contact List**

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