



National Environmental Health Association

“Environmental health is about protecting people from the harmful effects in their environment, whether that is an unsafe home, poor hygiene in a restaurant, or air pollution. It is the versatility of our members’ skills, however, that has been recognized during the current pandemic. They have been deployed in numerous essential areas to ensure services are provided, the virus is contained, and people are kept safe and well,”

**Jon Buttolph, Associate Director of Membership and Professional Development,
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, England**

“Most environmental health professionals worked 8 hours a day before COVID-19. Right now, with extended work activities, such as monitoring all local funerals, enforcing social distancing, improving contact tracing, and case investigations, we are working closer to 12 hours a day,”

**Stephen Musarapasi, President,
Zimbabwe Environmental Health Practitioners Association**

2020 World Environmental Health Day Declaration

COVID-19 has affirmed what we already believed to be true: that the field of environmental health is comprised of practical professionals who effectively promote and protect the health, safety and economic security of people, and the environment in which they reside. The profession has worked overtime since the COVID-19 pandemic emerged in early 2020. Environmental Health professionals are often modestly compensated, unseen and unrecognized by many. Nonetheless, they are an essential resource in international, national, and local efforts to minimize risk to the public’s health.

Our professional network possesses diverse official designations — environmental health officer, environmental health specialist, and sanitarian, to name a few — but

one thing they have in common is that they are often under resourced and have been asked to take on expanded duties under stressful conditions. In the face of these challenges, they have prevailed. They have guided businesses to create safe workplaces for their employees. They continue to ensure the safety of food being served in and purchased from restaurants. They have offered insights and recommendations on public gatherings and how they can occur in a safe manner. They have provided technical assistance to hospitals, early child education and emergency preparations. They have collaborated with older adults and vulnerable populations to ensure they remain safe. They have been involved in contingency planning, contact tracing, passenger surveillance, assessment of quarantine and isolation facilities, and the supervision of cleaning and disinfection of healthcare facilities. In short, they safeguard environmental and health infrastructure which is vital for all humans.

Environmental health knows no social or geographical limits. This professional network is active in the private, public, and voluntary sectors and uniformed services throughout the globe. Across multiple jurisdictions, regardless of job titles or designations, and with the help of support staff, environmental health professionals have been engaged in the tasks of translating scientific knowledge into the practice of prevention and recovery during the pandemic. Environmental health organizations worldwide are unified in our applause of the character, dedication, and service of our colleagues. While environmental health professionals and their work can go unrecognized, they are essential to modern society. They are like the rising sun each morning, scarcely noted, and at that the same time essential to life as we know it. As we emerge from this pandemic, environmental health professionals will be there to prepare us, and escort us through future challenges. We collectively thank them for their professionalism and perseverance.

In admiration and respect, we are:

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