

Bridging Research and Practice for a Healthier Workforce

**IMPACT
REPORT**

2025

The Southwest Center for Occupational and Environmental Health

I'm pleased to deliver the Southwest Center for Occupational and Environmental Health (SWCOEH) **Impact Summary Report 2025: Bridging Research and Practice for a Healthier Workforce**. Since 1977, the SWCOEH has been responding to the critical need to protect and promote the health, safety, and well-being of the workforce through innovative research, education, and outreach in occupational and environmental health. Located in the UTHealth Houston School of Public Health, the SWCOEH faculty are engaged in research to better understand workplace hazards and risks and develop strategies to ensure a healthy and productive workforce. State of the art graduate degree training, continuing education, and outreach programs ensure the next generation of occupational and environmental health professionals is ready to lead the future of work.

We invite you to review the accomplishments of the SWCOEH and join us as we deliver on our commitment to worker health, safety, and well-being that is critical to economic growth and stability, healthy and resilient communities, and individual well-being.



Sarah A. Felknor, DrPH

Professor and Center Director
UTHealth Houston School of Public Health
Southwest Center for Occupational and
Environmental Health

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IMPACT REPORT

For nearly 50 years, the Southwest Center for Occupational and Environmental Health has advanced worker and community well-being through research, education, and collaboration. We train future leaders, support underserved workers, and promote safe, sustainable and productive workplaces through innovation and impact.

MILESTONES

1977

The SWCOEH was established in 1977 as one of the first nine National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)-funded Education and Research Centers (ERC), and is now one of only 18 ERCs in the nation.

1985

In 1985, the SWCOEH became a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Occupational Health. Having grown considerably since we were established, we also conduct research on how environmental and occupational exposures affect health and on how to mitigate health risks associated with these exposures.

2019

In 2019, the SWCOEH launched the nation's first and only doctoral program in Total Worker Health (TWH), and joined the NIOSH TWH Affiliates program, strengthening a partnership spanning nearly five decades.

KEY FACTS 2020–2025

96%

Between 2020 and 2024, **96% of NIOSH trainees were employed** upon graduation and **92%** were employed in an Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) field.

55 | 360

Over 55 new research grants resulted in 360 publications. Research topics included climate health, contingent workers, environmental risk assessment, future of work, global OSH, violence prevention, and worker health, safety, and well-being.

16,532

The Continuing Education program, which provides OSH professionals with specialized courses in response to current and emerging training needs, provided **16,532 person-hours** of training to **5,229 participants**.

21,000

The Outreach program—which translates research to practice to promote and protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of workers—partnered with over **100 organizations** to provide 45,000 outreach education contact hours to over **21,000 people**.

RESEARCH
SPOTLIGHTS



Jooyeon Hwang, PhD is leading a \$5 million project funded by the Texas Legislature for early detection and research on the risk of cancer among firefighters. Her research focuses on evaluating the relationship between occupational exposure to specific contaminants and adverse health effects in several different industries.



Shannon Guillot-Wright, PhD is an award-winning researcher who established and leads the Docside Clinic: Connecting Docs to Docks to provide commercial fishermen and waterfront workers along the Gulf Coast with access to primary care, behavioral health care, and safety net social services.



William "Brett" Perkison, MD, MPH leads research on heat stress prevention and disaster preparedness efforts related to the effects of climate change, including the development of "Pocket Ark", an e-learning tool which provides critical safety information and logistical support for workers responding to weather-related disasters.

PREMIER
GRADUATE
PLACEMENTS



LOOKING
AHEAD

IMPACT INITIATIVES 2025-2030



Investigate priority research areas such as work environment, climate health, mental health, and the health and safety burden of work.



Expand and leverage current partnerships to enhance reach and impact among worker groups, policy makers, stakeholders, and government.



Expand adult learning models across the working life continuum to provide training and outreach that is responsive to worker and industry need.



Develop effective and innovative dissemination and implementation strategies that resonate with populations of interest.

CONTINUING EDUCATION SERIES

- Drs. Faiyaz Ali & Mariam Maribel Bhojani Visiting Scholars Endowment Lecture Series
- Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences Research Seminar Series
- Industrial Hygiene Seminar Series
- Environmental Health & Safety Academy
- Occupational Health Journal Club
- Texas Physicians for Social Responsibility