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Dear PHEER Network,

Welcome to the **Summer 2025** edition of the PHEER Network newsletter, your source for updates, events, and stories from the community of public health disaster researchers.



## Public Health Extreme Events Research (PHEER)

is a public health researcher-led network that mobilizes rapidly, informs evolving disaster research agendas and funding decisions, and advances the field of public health disaster science.

PHEER is part of the broader [CONVERGE network](#), which strengthens relationships between disciplinary communities and advances the scientific rigor and ethical conduct of hazards and disaster research.

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## Network Updates

### **PHEER Presents at National Hurricane Conference**

On April 16th four PHEER researchers attended the National Hurricane Conference in New Orleans, LA. This annual conference is designed to improve hurricane preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation in order to save lives and property in the U.S. and the tropical islands of the Caribbean and Pacific.

In response to **Hurricane Beryl**, and later expanded to encompass **Hurricanes Helene and Milton**, PHEER had established a **Health Impacts Task Force** to identify unique and innovative uses of Location-Based Data (LBD) for estimating the indirect effects of a hurricane on the health and well-being of an exposed population. With the goal of opening a dialog with practitioners at the conference, the PHEER researchers provided examples of how LBD can serve as an early signal of health system disruptions, population vulnerabilities, supply chain fractures, population movement, mitigation and adaptation strategies, among other factors, and may be predictive of future health effects. The presentations were as follows:

**Diana Ramirez-Rios, PhD**, Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, University at Buffalo, “Disaster-induced transportation barriers and their impact on access to health facilities for socially vulnerable communities”

**Marissa Sogluizzo, MPH**, Program in Public Health, Stony Brook University, “Understanding the impacts of hurricane-induced health system disruptions through Facebook utilization data”

**Sangung Park, PhD**, University of Florida Transportation Institute, “Developing a dynamic social vulnerability index (DSVI) to support emergency response”

**Michael A. Stoto, PhD**, Department of Health Management and Policy, Georgetown University, served as moderator and introduced PHEER's work.

The presentations demonstrated how LBD can reveal gaps in healthcare access in vulnerable areas and how population movement data tracked disruption and recovery timelines. In addition to facilitating public health research, emergency response practitioners in the audience said that the LBD could be very useful for tracking population movements during an emergency, and also for planning purposes. To be most useful, the LBD should take account of geographical boundaries used in emergency response operations and planning, as well as hospital and healthcare service areas.

The presentations can be found on the PHEER website [here](#).

## **LA Wildfires Response**

In response to the devastating 2025 LA Wildfires, PHEER has developed an [exposure map](#) that is freely available to the research, practice, and policy communities, as well as those directly affected by the wildfires. The objective of this map is to establish a web-based geospatial platform to collect and curate critical exposure measures related to the initial fire and wildfire smoke, as well as secondary hazards associated with contaminated soil, air, water, or debris.

As part of this effort, we are tracking the locations and types of research efforts related to these wildfires. Our goal is to coordinate research efforts so that researchers may increase the impact of their work by planning research (e.g., focusing on different exposures) in similar study sites, or seeing where other data have been collected to complement/coordinate data analysis. To that end, we have developed a [brief and simple survey](#) that allows researchers to input their study location with an interactive drawing tool so we can create a master map of all the ongoing research efforts. Please consider contributing to our survey if this relates to your work!

## **Data Governance**

PHEER's intent is to make the [exposure map](#) freely available to the research, practice, and policy communities, as well as those directly affected by the 2025 LA

wildfires. Data dissemination, however, can be tricky. The map links to a variety of data sources, including some publicly available at the aggregate level, others based on high-resolution sensors, and potentially individual-level health information. Each dataset has different expectations about appropriate use and confidentiality protection. And to the extent that data from two or more sources can be compiled, maintaining confidentiality becomes more challenging.

The PHEER Steering Committee has developed a set of use cases to facilitate a thoughtful approach to these data governance issues. But the work has only started, and participation of other PHEER members would be very welcome. If you're interested in participating in this work, please contact Steering Committee co-chair Mike Stoto at [mike.stoto@gmail.com](mailto:mike.stoto@gmail.com).

## Why Join PHEER?

Collectively, PHEER is building a community of public health disaster researchers, practitioners, and agency partners. Our work has never been more important for the support of healthier, more resilient communities in the face of disasters. **Here are just a few of the many reasons to join the PHEER Network:**

1. Access a community of researchers beyond your institution,
2. Access resources, information, and curated data including research opportunities and collaborations with interdisciplinary partners across the nation,
3. Engage in opportunities for high impact work,
4. Apply for pilot funding from PHEER, and
5. Promote coordination to address community & practitioner concerns.

*Thank you for being a vital part of our community.*

## Help Us Grow

We are always eager to welcome new members. Please consider connecting your colleagues engaged in public health and disaster research to our network by directing them to the PHEER Membership Application.



## Get Involved

Your support fuels our mission to coordinate a public health disaster research community of practice. Here's how you can get involved:

### Keep Us Updated

Send us any recent publications or news features so that we can highlight your work to our community. Please mail updates to [pheernetwork@gmail.com](mailto:pheernetwork@gmail.com)

### Attend Events

Join us at our upcoming events and engage with fellow network members.

### Join Us on Slack

Join the PHEER community on the **#pheer** thread within the [DesignSafe Slack channel](#). Members will first need to sign up for a Design Safe account (register [here](#)).

## Community Spotlight

Would you like your work featured in our next newsletter? [Send us your updates!](#)



In this issue, we want to spotlight our own leadership team member, [Dr. David Eisenman, MD, MSHS](#), and his work with the Los Angeles Fire Human Exposure and Long-Term Health (HEALTH) Study. This study is a consortium between Harvard University, University of California, Los Angeles, University of Southern California, University of Texas at Austin, University of California, Davis, Stanford University, Yale University, and Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. The consortium's objective is to evaluate environmental exposures from the 2025 Los Angeles County wildfires and identify which pollutants are present, at what levels, and where to assess the health impacts of the wildfire emissions. The consortium received funding from local philanthropy and has divided their work into three core components: environmental exposures, health outcomes, and communications.

To date, the environmental exposures group has been successful in organizing sampling of indoor and outdoor air pollutants, water pollutants, debris, and ash in the impacted areas from the Eaton and Palisades fire. The team has already issued six data briefs to the public on these samples and received media attention. Now, the team is creating policy recommendations and meeting with legislators. After the health outcomes and communications teams get underway, the goal is to have a longitudinal study with common data elements across each exposure dataset.

PHEER is working in collaboration with the consortium to map the types and locations of data collected.

## Upcoming Events

### **July 13 - 16: 50th Annual Natural Hazards Workshop** — Broomfield, CO

Since 1975, the Natural Hazards Center has hosted the Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop in Colorado. Today the Workshop brings together federal, state, and local mitigation and emergency management officials and planning professionals; representatives of nonprofit, private sector, and humanitarian organizations; hazards and disaster researchers; and others dedicated to alleviating the impacts of disasters. The Workshop is widely known for helping people to make connections between research and practice and for building bridges across disciplines and organizations. Sign up for workshop updates [here](#).

### **July 16 - 17: Natural Hazards Center Researchers Meeting** — Broomfield, CO

The 2025 Researchers Meeting will be held from 2:00 to 8:00 p.m. MDT on Wednesday, July 16 and from 7:30 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. on Thursday, July 17 following the 50th Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop. The meeting schedule includes breakout sessions for paper presentations, roundtable discussions, and networking events. This meeting is open to all members of the hazards and disaster community.

Please join us for the following topics that PHEER and colleagues will be presenting:

- Cutler N, Epstein J, Morris O, Sury J, Eisenman D, Errett N, Horney JA, Abramson D. **Tracking health exposure data for the 2025 Southern California wildfires with ArcGIS**, Natural Hazards Center Annual Researchers Meeting July 2025.
- Horney JA, Fleury-Steiner R, Miller SL, Camphausen LC. **Gender-based violence in rural America: How disasters intensify existing inequities**. Natural Hazards Center Annual Researchers Meeting July 2025.
- Horney JA, Dong S, Bauman P, Moreau L. **Stigma versus safety: Can we address opioid treatment access barriers in disasters?** Natural Hazards Center Annual Researchers Meeting July 2025.

- Howell P, Contreras S, Donoghoe M, Beveridge T, Khajehei A, Horney JA. **Home-grown resilience: Local solutions for disaster management**, Natural Hazards Center Annual Researchers Meeting July 2025

Registration for the Researchers Meeting can be added to the Natural Hazards Workshop registration or is available at a stand-alone rate. Register [here](#).

## Featured Publication

Would you like your work featured in our next newsletter? [Send us your updates!](#)



MethodsX

Available online 26 May 2025, 103396

In Press, Journal Pre-proof [What's this?](#)



# Development of a questionnaire library for rapid health data acquisition during wildfire events

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PHEER members, **Lilian Liu** and [Dr. Elena Austin](#), and their colleagues recently had their development of a centralized, publicly accessible library of questionnaires to support rapid data collection during wildfire events accepted as a **MethodsX** publication. Using a systematic review guided by PRISMA and a search of existing repositories, they identified 100 questionnaires across eight health domains, with a strong emphasis on mental and respiratory health. The library is designed to help researchers quickly tailor instruments to their study populations and is accompanied by a forthcoming decision-tree tool to guide questionnaire selection.

This approach may also serve as a model for rapid data collection following other types of disasters. Read more [here](#).

# Funding Announcements

## PHEER Rapid Research Awards

In response to the 2025 Southern California wildfires, PHEER mobilized to serve as a coordinating platform for the public health disaster research community of practice. The PHEER network had two main objectives:

1. Develop an environmental exposure [web map](#) that is freely available to the research, practice, and policy communities. The map is designed to illustrate the location and type of environmental assessments conducted by public and academic research teams and to curate the data collected by researchers where possible.
2. Partner with the NHERI Natural Hazards Reconnaissance (RAPID) Facility to collect perishable data on the wildfires using a hyperspectral sensor. These data were collected March 2025 by a drone-mounted camera flying at approximately 150 feet above 24 sampled census blocks, representing about 1,000 households as well as institutional settings and public spaces. RAPID collected data using the Headwall VNIR-SWIR sensor, and the spatial resolution of each pixel is 2-3 centimeters.

PHEER will fund one Rapid Research Grant, **totaling \$5,000 in costs**, to conduct analyses of environmental exposures using the hyperspectral data. Read more and apply [here](#).

## Burroughs Wellcome Fund - Climate Change and Human Health Seed Grants

The Burroughs Wellcome Fund aims to stimulate the growth of new connections between thinkers working in largely disconnected fields, who, together, may change the course of climate change's impact on human health. Between Fall 2023 and Summer 2026, Burroughs Wellcome Fund will dedicate \$1 million to supporting

**small, early-stage grants of \$2,500–\$50,000** toward achieving this goal. Successful applicants include academic scientists, physicians, and public health experts, community organizations, science outreach centers, non-biomedical academic departments, and more.

Proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis **through July 2026**. A review will be conducted quarterly. Read more about the award and how to apply [here](#).

## **Call for Papers: The 2025 Los Angeles Fires**

The focus of this new joint Special Issue in [ACS ES&T Air](#) and [ACS ES&T Water](#) is to advance understanding of the fate, transport, and extent of environmental contamination from physical and chemical urban fire contaminants across multiple media (air, water, soil). It is also to investigate the human exposure potential through inhalation, dermal, and ingestion routes, and evaluate acute and long-term ecosystem and human health impacts across multiple endpoints. Topics include but are not limited to:

- Air quality impacts of wildfires in the Los Angeles basin
- Water quality impacts of wildfires in the Los Angeles basin
- Wildfire impacts on soil from air deposition in the Los Angeles basin
- Impacts of emissions on atmospheric chemistry and climate forcing
- Environmental impacts of pink intumescent powders and flame retardants
- Impacts on human, animal, and ecosystem health
- Epidemiological studies of short and long-term impacts of exposures related to fire emissions
- Worker health and safety (e.g. firefighters, remediation crews)
- Rebuilding and wildfire resilience (e.g. emissions from the built environment, air and/or water impacts of combustion of urban materials)
- Community based efforts, partnerships, and role of citizen science in wildfires response and recovery

This Special Issue will serve as a rolling collection of new works. Currently, there is **no submission deadline** to enable longer-term studies to be completed and form part of this Special Issue. Learn more about the call [here](#).

**Warm regards,**  
**The PHEER Leadership Team**



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