

FEBRUARY 12, 2024

# NC EPHT NEWSLETTER

North Carolina Environmental Public Health Tracking Program

## Newsletter Overview

Happy New Year! As we begin 2024 we reflect on our accomplishments and how our program has evolved in it's first year. While we're proud of those accomplishments we direct our focus on the upcoming year and how we can work toward our mission. Our goal this year is to grow partnerships and work together to deliver prevention efforts that will improve environmental health.

### Highlights in this Edition:

- **Program Updates to our Environmental Health Data Dashboard**
- **Talking Environmental Justice**
- **EPA Environmental Justice Gov 2 Gov program**
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- **Introducing our new Environmental Epidemiologist**

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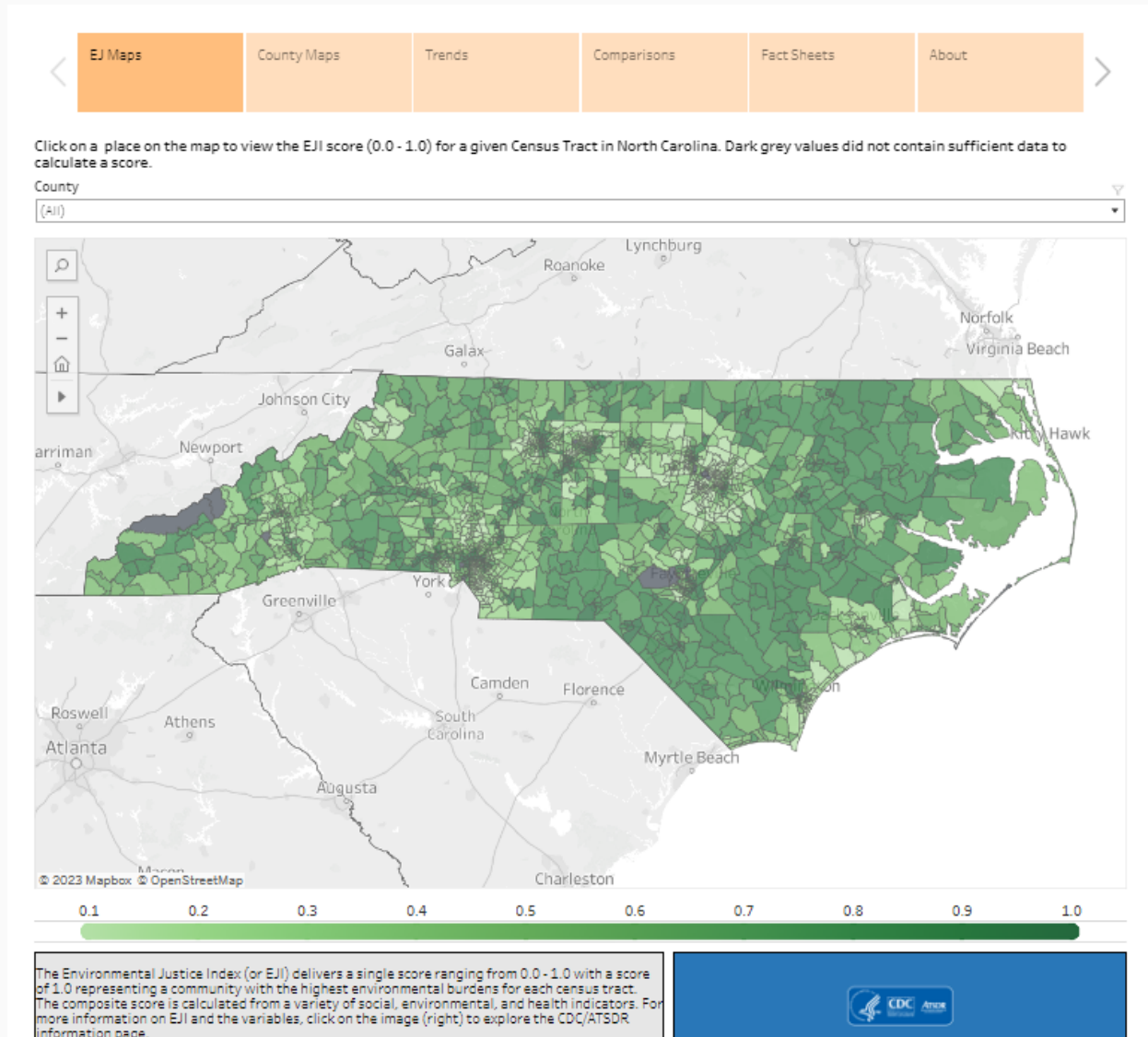
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## Dashboard Updates:

Our Environmental Health Data Dashboard has been updated to feature an Environmental Justice Index (EJI) map, sourced from the CDC. This integration allows for the visualization of EJI data, categorized by county and census tract. The EJI combines environmental and health information into a single value for comparative analysis based on location.

As part of improvements, Data Explorer has been temporarily removed. Stay tuned for its enhanced version with added data stories.



Visit our [EHDD](#) to explore more and provide feedback. Share your thoughts with us using this link: [Feedback Form](#)



# Recent Engagements



Attending the EJCAN Toxic Tour in Sampson County, September 2023

## EJCAN Toxic Tour in Sampson County:

- On September 23, 2023, our team participated in a Toxic Tour sponsored by the Environmental Justice Community Action Network (EJCAN). During our tour we visited the area near community members' residences next to a concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO), toured the landfill and its vicinity, and engaged with local community members at Snow Hill Baptist Church.



Bringing the Environmental Health Data Dashboard to the NCPHA Fall Educational Conference

## The North Carolina Public Health Association Fall Educational Conference:

- Our team attended The NCPHA Fall Educational Conference held September 27-29, 2023, in Concord, NC. This conference brought together public health professionals at every level, from students to mid-career professionals to retired experts from around the state. The purpose was to exchange information and contribute to creating a healthier North Carolina through effective public health practice and engaged citizens.
- Additionally, within the NCPHA Environmental Health Section, our Public Health Educator, Aminah Keys, was appointed Secretary for the Environmental Health Section.

## NCEJN Annual Environmental Justice Summit:

- Members of our team attended the North Carolina Environmental Justice Network's (NCEJN) annual summit October 20-21, 2023. This year's theme was "False Solutions, Honest Repair" and provided an opportunity to exchange ideas and explore innovative solutions to address disparities in Environmental Health.



Learning from EJ Communities at the NCEJN Annual Environmental Justice Summit

## Environmental Justice Action Forum:

- On November 30, 2023 NIEHS and the West End Revitalization Association (WERA) hosted an Environmental Justice Action Forum. It was a day where stakeholders, government agencies, and community groups gathered to identify and define EJ issues resulting from the Western Electric/Tarheel Army Missile Plant and to discuss solutions.

## Recognitions and Initiatives:



### EPA Environmental Justice Government to Government (EJG2G) Award:

We are thrilled to announce that DHHS, in collaboration with key partners including the Environmental Justice Community Action Network (EJCAN), Open Heaven Community Center, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Appalachian State University, has been awarded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice Government to Government (EJG2G) Award. This significant grant totals \$1 million over three years and will support our joint proposal titled 'Partnership to Address Private Well Contamination in Sampson County.' The initiative focuses on supplementing private well testing and providing essential health education and low-cost private well treatment in Sampson County, aimed at mitigating harmful contaminant exposure in environmental justice communities.

### Executive Order 292 (E0292) by Governor Cooper:

Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order No. 292 on October 24, 2023, signifying a significant step forward in prioritizing environmental justice. This order expands upon Governor Cooper's earlier Executive Order 246 from January 2022, reestablishing the Secretary of Environmental Quality's Environmental Justice and Equity Advisory Board as the Governor's Environmental Justice Advisory Council. Additionally, the order mandates DHHS and other cabinet agencies to develop environmental justice goals and outcomes, a crucial step toward comprehensive strategies for addressing disparities.





## Team Updates:

We're happy to introduce the newest member of our team, Dr. Olufemi "Femi" Ajumobi. Femi joined our team in September as our Environmental Epidemiologist and has quickly demonstrated his passion and acumen for Environmental Health and Environmental Justice.



**Olufemi Ajumobi, Ph.D.**  
**Environmental Epidemiologist**

Dr. Olufemi Ajumobi is a physician with a PhD in Public Health from the University of Nevada, Reno. He has over two decades of combined clinical, public health practice and research experience in Nigeria and the United States. Recently, he joined the EPHT team as the Environmental Epidemiologist and aims to leverage data-driven solutions to mitigate the impact of environmental risks on the quality of health of the people of North Carolina.

# Reflect, Engage, and Connect

## Closing the Chapter with Gratitude

In September, Dr. Kim Gaetz moved to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to continue her work in environmental health as a Science Editor for the journal Environmental Health Perspectives. We express our heartfelt appreciation for her many contributions to our team and wish her all the best.

## Enhance Our Dashboard Experience – Your Feedback Matters!

We value your input! Please offer your feedback on our [Environmental Health Data Dashboard](#) by completing the form below so that we can continue to improve it.

[Feedback Form](#)

or scan here:



## Stay Connected, Stay Informed

As we continue our journey together, we invite you to stay connected and engaged. Explore our improved website, and reach out to us with any suggestions, questions, or opportunities to collaborate.

Together, we can empower communities, inform decisions, and build a healthier, more sustainable future.

Best regards,

The NC EPHT Team

\*Empowering Communities, Informing Decisions\*

Website: <https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/oe/programs/EnvPubHealthTracking.html> | Email: [nceph\\_t\\_support@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:nceph_t_support@dhhs.nc.gov)

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