



NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2026 - ISSUE 1

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WELCOME TO THE REDSTONE NEWSLETTER – FIRST ISSUE!

The Sumner M. Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness (RGC) is pleased to share our first biannual newsletter. Read about exciting events and research conducted during the Fall Semester of 2025 below. We look forward to keeping you connected through these updates and invite you to learn more about our work through our website.


HIGHLIGHTS

- Our Opinion piece, “[Beyond Emergency Relief: The Role of U.S. Foreign Health Assistance Amid Growing Displacement and Climate Change](#),” was published in PLOS Global Public Health last November. The article presents key insights from our roundtable held at the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health (GWSPH) on June 3, 2025 with members of the humanitarian, academic, and nonprofit communities.
- [The RGC granted four Pilot Awards](#) last semester to faculty, post-doc and doctoral investigators from GWSPH and School of Medicine and Health Sciences to conduct one-year research projects at the intersection of climate adaptation and disease prevention. The pilot grants will help investigators position for future external research funding.
- During the [APHA 2025 Annual Meeting](#) in November, RGC Director, Timothy Holtz, presented at the International Section’s Community-Based Primary Health Care pre-conference workshop and moderated the panel, Current and Emerging Challenges in Infectious Diseases. Redstone Scholar Yashan Wang ([link](#)) and Graduate Research Assistant Katie O’Brien ([link](#)) presented posters at the meeting.




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Beyond emergency relief: The role of U.S. foreign health assistance amid growing displacement and climate change

Timothy H. Holtz , Lisa Hilmi, Maya M. Rao, John Borrazzo, Dennis Cherian, Colleen K. GallagherThomas, Mark Hetfield, Dennis J. King, Barry S. Levy, Jed Meline, Marie D. Price, John P. Quattrochi, Adam K. Richards, Lynn R. Goldman, Steven J. Hansch

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Article	Authors	Metrics	Comments	Media Coverage
				
1. Introduction 2. Key issues and recommendations 3. Conclusion Acknowledgments References		Citation: Holtz TH, Hilmi L, Rao MM, Borrazzo J, Cherian D, GallagherThomas CK, et al. (2025) Beyond emergency relief: The role of U.S. foreign health assistance amid growing displacement and climate change. PLOS Glob Public Health 5(11): e0005321. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0005321 Editor: Julia Robinson, PLOS: Public Library of Science, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA		



For real-time news on upcoming activities and events, be sure to follow us on Instagram and LinkedIn—we’d love for you to join us!



Recap of Fall 2025

Bridging Education and Practice

Guest speaker from NASA Goddard Space Flight Center

On September 18, the RGC co-sponsored a GWSPH Department of Global Health Research and Practice Seminar, featuring Dr. Assaf Anyamba from University of Maryland, Baltimore County and the Earth Sciences Division of NASA Goddard Space Flight Center.

Dr. Anyamba described his work on geospatial modelling, incorporating satellite data on rainfall, vegetation, and land surface temperature to predict Rift Valley Fever disease risk and avert livestock deaths in East Africa.

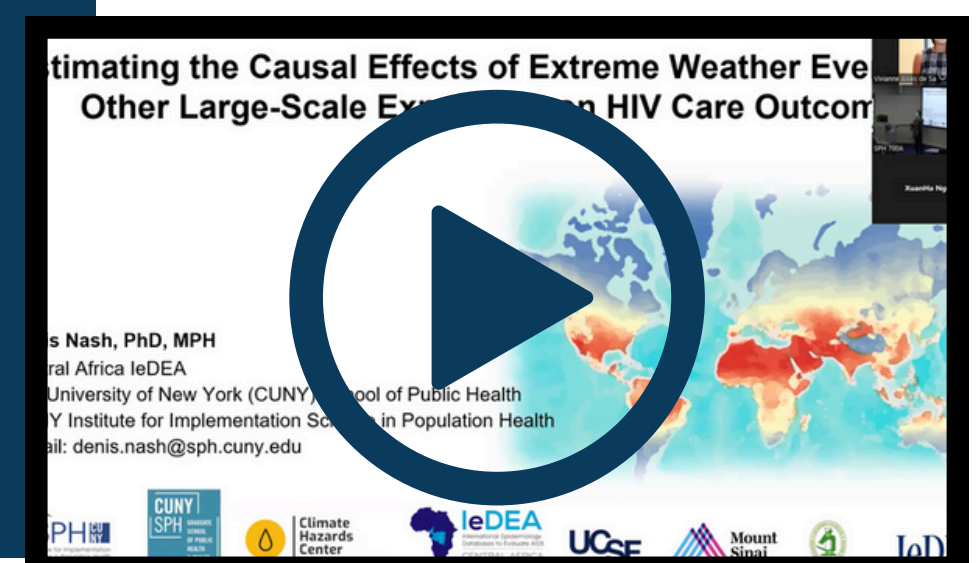


From left: Katherine O'Brien, Sarah Dumas, Timothy Holtz, Assaf Anyamba, Afrin Iqbal, Maya Rao

CUNY's Denis Nash speaks about climate impacts on HIV

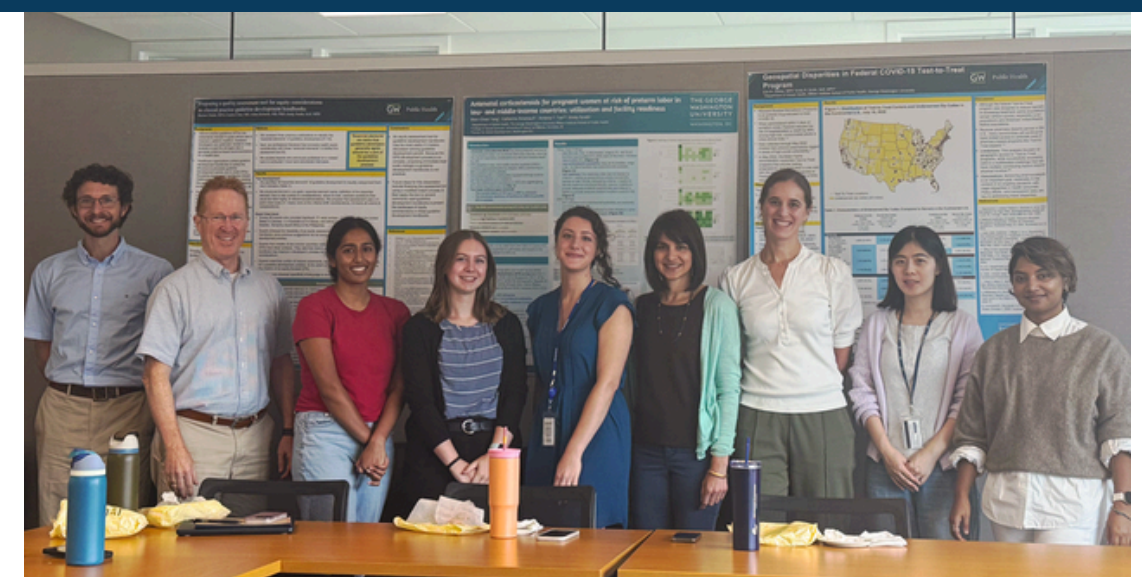


The RGC invited Dr. Denis Nash from the City University of New York (CUNY) to speak at the GWSPH Department of Epidemiology's seminar series on October 31. Dr. Nash presented his global collaborations on HIV cohort studies, including research on the relationship between climate change and HIV care outcomes. [Watch the recording.](#)



Top left: Timothy Holtz, Sofia Sciancalepore, Sarah Dumas, Maya Rao, Afrin Iqbal
Bottom left: Katherine O'Brien, Julia Blouin, Aishwarya Bandaru, Yashan Wang

Redstone PhD students connect



From left: Tim O'Neal, Timothy Holtz, Aishwarya Bandaru, Katherine O'Brien, Sofia Sciancalepore, Maya Rao, Sarah Dumas, Yashan Wang, Afrin Iqbal

This past fall, the RGC hosted a gathering with 5 [Redstone Scholars](#), who receive support from the center for their doctoral work. The RGC welcomed both new and continuing scholars, fostering connections across cohorts. The scholars also presented updates on the progress of their work. We were also delighted to introduce 2 new Graduate Research Assistants who joined the RGC this semester.



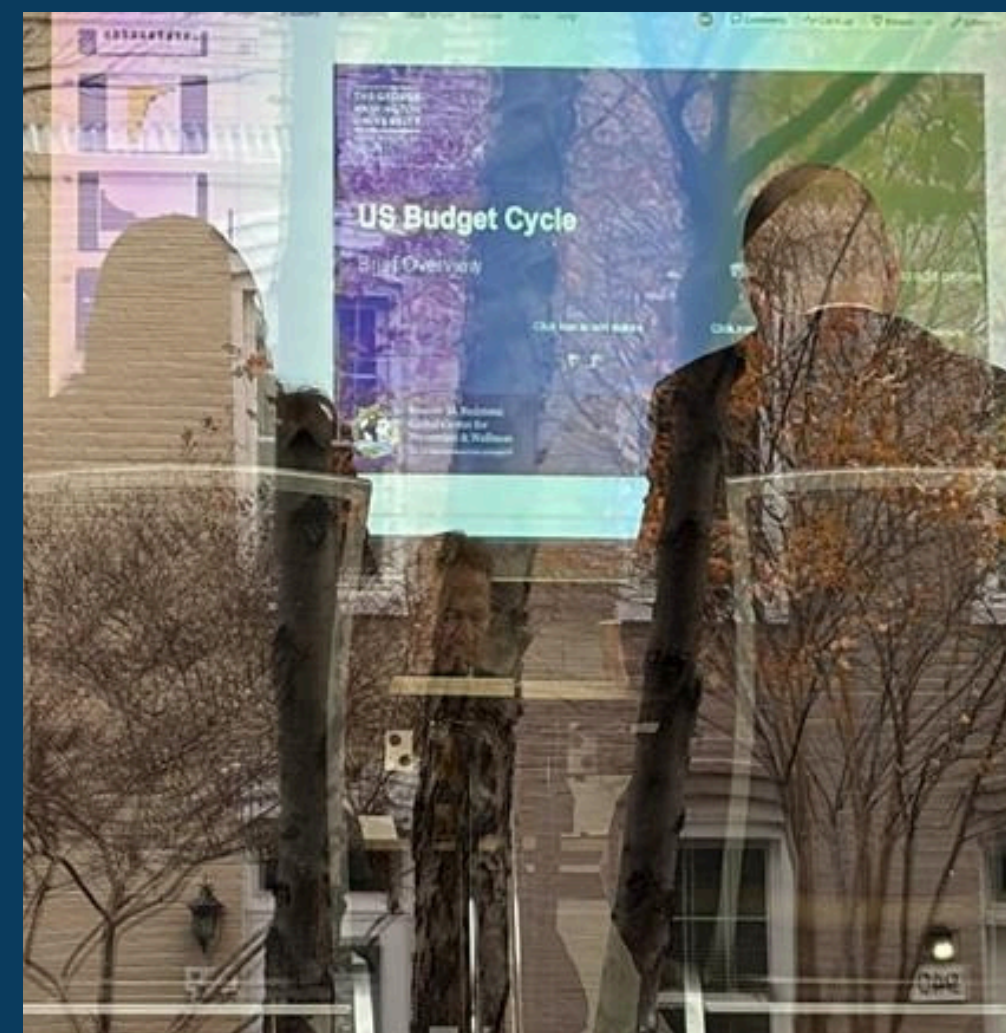
**HUMANITARIAN
ACTION INITIATIVE**
ELLIOTT SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

A conversation on Climate and Health in Humanitarian Settings

The RGC organized a panel discussion on Climate Change and Health in Humanitarian Settings at GWSPH on November 19 as part of the Humanitarian Action Initiative's University Seminar Series on the Future of Aid. Dr. Ramin Asgary, Director of the Humanitarian Health and Disaster Response Program at GWSPH, moderated the discussion with seasoned humanitarian practitioners from Relief International, GOAL, and the Department of State.

Collaboration

Embassy staff convened to discuss future of foreign aid



On November 20, the RGC convened a roundtable with diplomatic staff from nine embassies based in Washington, D.C., representing donor countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Roundtable participants discussed the future of foreign assistance for health and climate adaptation amid the global decline in official development assistance. Topics included shifting dynamics of major players in foreign aid, unique expertise of donor countries, and future directions following COP30.

We welcome partnerships that align with our mission—whether through events, training, or new initiatives—reach us at redstonectr@gwu.edu to connect.

Research in Progress

Evaluations of Climate-Informed Early Warning Systems for Foodborne, Waterborne, and Vector-Borne Diseases: A Scoping Review

The RGC is reviewing the evidence for early warning systems that incorporate climate data as an effective infectious disease prevention and control strategy. The [protocol](#) was finalized in September 2025, with 9,900 articles retrieved from three scientific databases. The research team is mid-way through screening articles, aiming to conclude the review in the summer of 2026 and publish findings next fall.

Planning for Extreme Heat: Analyzing State and Local Planning Documents

Research Scientist, Sarah Dumas, is working with researchers at Cornell University to build a database of government documents used to plan for, prepare for, and respond to extreme heat at state, county, and city levels across the U.S. The team will analyze the heat plans to describe the “leading practices” and trends in state and local heat governance and planning.

Community-based research on changing risks of infectious diseases in Colombia

The RGC is collaborating with the [Chang Lab](#) and researchers at [Universidad Libre](#) on a pilot study to assess knowledge, risk perceptions, and behaviors related to climate-sensitive infectious diseases (CSID) in a Colombian community. Survey data will be contextualized with qualitative research to identify household and community-level factors linked to increased risk for exposure to CSIDs, subsequent illness, and delayed healthcare-seeking.

Climate Change and the Spread of Tick-Borne Diseases in the Mid-Atlantic

RGC researchers are examining the relationship between climate and tick-borne diseases in the Mid-Atlantic and will analyze current surveillance, data collection, and prevention strategies across the region. The project aim to advance public health solutions for climate-informed tick-borne disease surveillance and prevention at local, state, and regional levels.

Survey of American perspectives on climate-sensitive infectious diseases

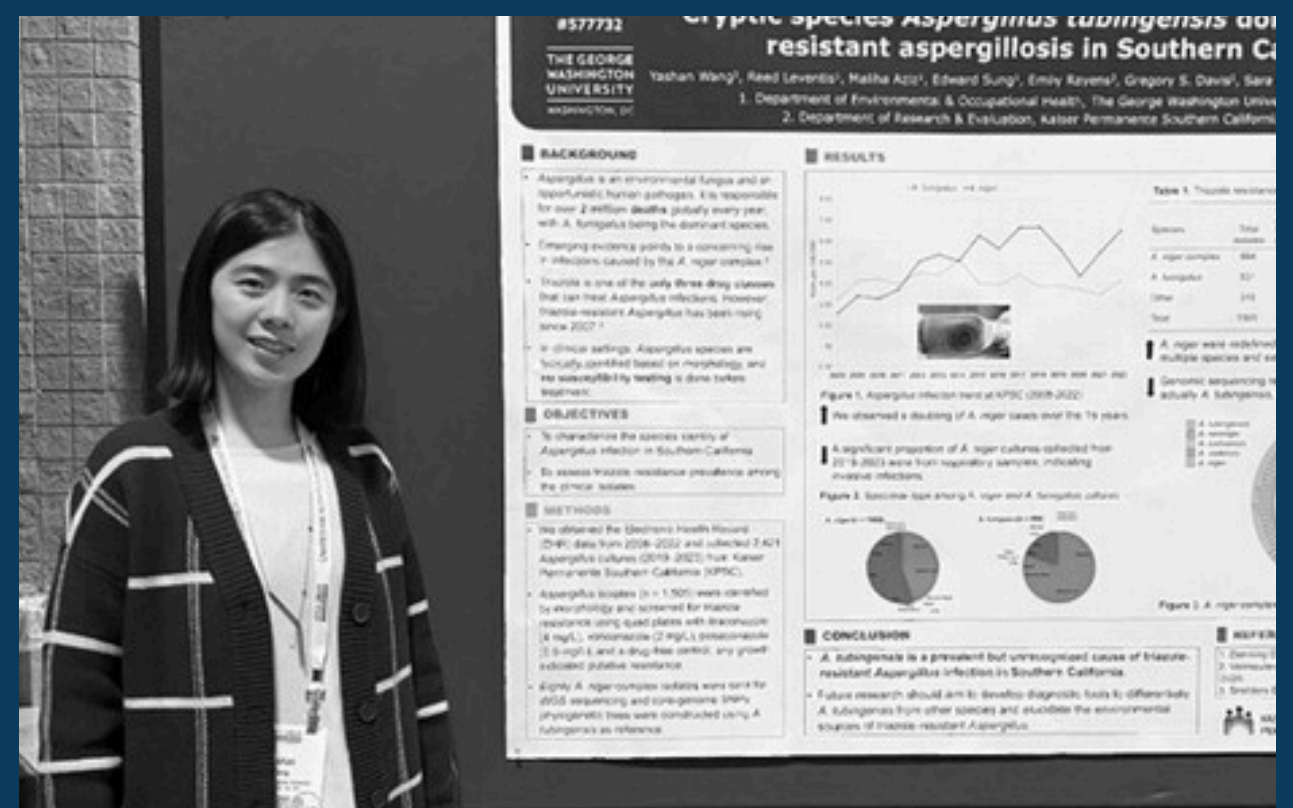
RGC team members contributed questions on climate adaptation and infectious diseases to [Verasight's Omnibus](#) survey at the APHA 2025 annual meeting. A sample of 3,000 United States adults took the survey in November. Responses revealed that over half of Americans are concerned that climate change could increase their risk of getting an infectious disease. However, in the past year, only about 1 in 3 Americans used mosquito repellent or stayed inside when mosquitos are active, and only 1 in 4 checked for ticks after spending time in the woods. Most Americans (4 in 5) support measures to prevent vector-borne diseases in national climate change policies. View a further breakdown of the results [here](#).

Researcher Spotlight: Yashan Wang, PhD

Dr. Yashan Wang is a current Redstone Scholar with a pilot grant and post-doctoral support from the RGC. Read more about her research background and work below:

“I came to GW in 2021 to pursue my PhD in Environmental Health after completing my master’s degree at Johns Hopkins University, where I learned about food animal production and antibiotic resistance research. With a background in food science and experience working on national surveillance programs for antimicrobial residues in animal-derived foods in China, I developed a growing interest in the clinical impact of antimicrobial resistance as I trained in public health.

Recently, I published my first-author paper in JAMA Network Open, identifying a prevalent but underrecognized cause of antifungal-resistant aspergillosis in California, and I successfully defended my dissertation in November. In the spring semester, I will continue at GW as a joint postdoctoral fellow with the Antibiotic Resistance Action Center and the RGC, further expanding my work on environmental infectious diseases and climate-related drivers of antimicrobial resistance.”



Noteworthy News

2025 Global Report of the Lancet Countdown: Climate-related health hazards have reached unprecedented levels, and delayed climate action has led to millions of preventable deaths annually. However, mobilization for climate action is growing, with nearly all (97%) surveyed cities reporting that they have completed or intend to complete climate change risk assessments.

UN warns of millions displaced by climate change: Ahead of COP30, UNHCR released the second iteration of its report on the effects of climate change on refugees—No Escape II: The Way Forward. Over the last decade, extreme weather has displaced about a quarter of a billion people and compounded challenges faced by displaced and host communities in fragile contexts.

Navigating the Climate Crisis in a New Era of Aid: The International Rescue Committee released a report in October 2025 that reveals gaps in climate adaptation funding for conflict-affected countries and calls for flexible, conflict-sensitive climate finance that is community-led and accessible to local actors.

Global warming made Hurricane Melissa more damaging, analysis finds: In October 2025, one of the strongest Atlantic hurricanes on record, caused massive destruction and casualties to islands in the Caribbean. World Weather Attribution researchers found that climate change increased the storm's windspeeds and rainfall and contributed to conditions under which the storm intensified.

How a frog apocalypse led to a rise in malaria in humans: Fungal-driven collapse of frog populations in Central America has allowed mosquito populations to surge, leading to a dramatic increase in malaria cases. This article illustrates how biodiversity loss can have direct, cascading consequences for human health—a clear One Health connection between ecosystem disruption, animal health, and human disease.

50 States, 50 Fixes: A highlight of successful environmental solutions from each of the 50 states.

Maya Rao
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Sarah Dumas
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Save The Date

① Mark your calendars for our seminar on March 5 co-sponsored by the GWSPH departments of Epidemiology and Global Health with Kevin De Cock, who will present his book, [Deployed: A Physician on the Front Lines of Global Health](#). An announcement with event details will be shared closer to the date.

② The RGC is a proud co-sponsor of the [2026 GWSPH Research Day](#), taking place on Wednesday, April 15. The Climate and Health Institute and RGC will jointly award the best abstracts/posters in the Climate and Health category. This award recognizes work that addresses topics at the intersection of climate change and health, and advances solutions for mitigation, adaptation, and health equity. Submissions may address diverse health outcomes and populations and may use innovative data, community-engaged approaches, or locally led strategies to improve public health in the context of climate change.

③ The RGC team looks forward to attending [DC Climate Week](#) from April 20 – 26, 2026 and contributing to the REACH Research Day to be held during that week.

Funding Opportunities

Look out for our 2026 pilot grant announcement coming soon. The RGC plans to award up to 4 projects between \$25,000 – \$40,000 each during Fiscal Year 2027. We will share the Request for Proposals in mid-February with further information on eligibility criteria by email and on our [website](#).

Burroughs Wellcome Fund Climate Change and Human Health Seed Grants provide \$2,500-\$50,000 for early stage, interdisciplinary research to address the impacts of climate change on human health. There are three cycles per year, with the next application deadline on April 23, 2026.