

# GuLF STUDY

## 2018 NEWSLETTER



Please remember to complete your health follow-up. You can do so by web or phone.



If contacted about your medical records, please sign and return the forms.



You will be entered into a drawing for \$500 after you complete your health follow-up.



If you have spill-related health concerns and need a referral to a doctor, please contact us.

Go to [gulfstudy.nih.gov](http://gulfstudy.nih.gov) or call the study office at **1-855-NIH-GULF (1-855-644-4853)** to complete your health follow-up.



Taking Steps Together to Learn More

### Every participant matters – tell us how you are doing!

The second health follow-up is underway. We still need to hear from many of you.



■ = complete  
■ = incomplete

👤 = 1,000

## ContactUS

📞 1-855-NIH-GULF (1-855-644-4853)

✉ info@gulfstudy.nih.gov

🌐 [gulfstudy.nih.gov](http://gulfstudy.nih.gov)

📘 NIH-GuLF-STUDY

## A Message from Dr. Dale Sandler

### Principal Investigator

We started the GuLF STUDY because clean-up workers and communities affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill were concerned about their current and future health. Between 2011 and 2013, more than 30,000 people joined the study and shared information about their past and current health problems. Since then, many participants have continued to provide health updates through surveys and clinical exams, but we have lost touch with others.

Our ability to answer questions about the long-term health effects of the spill depends on you and others who joined the study. We want to know how you are doing, regardless of whether you worked on the spill or not and regardless of your current health status. Our second health update is now in progress. We appreciate the information you have already shared and hope you complete the current follow-up, even if you have missed others.

In this newsletter, you will hear from community members and scientists about why ongoing participation is so important. You will also learn about some of our current research. You can read about some recent study results on the study website (<https://gulfstudy.nih.gov/en/publications.html>), including results of lung function tests completed at the home visits. These tests showed that a small number of workers, including those who worked near burning oil or helped decontaminate vessels or rocks, had worse lung function than workers who did not have these exposures. I encourage all participants to stay involved with the study and thank you for continuing in the many steps we take together to learn more.



## Messages from Our Advisors



David and Sharon Gauthier  
Lead Community Advisors  
Thibodaux, LA

*"We think that the most important part of the GuLF STUDY is that it continues to determine the effects of the oil spill on workers so closely connected to it. We need to know what kind of short and long-term effects have occurred. Without the continued support and participation of the folks in the Gulf STUDY, we may never know the effects on them or anyone else in the future. We feel that the ongoing calls, questionnaires, and medical exams are the best way to determine the real effects of the oil spill. So, answer the call and take the survey. This is the only way to document what happened and to make sure that the tragedy of the spill is not forgotten."*



L. Faye Grimsley, PhD  
Scientific Advisor  
Clinical Associate Professor  
Tulane University

*"As a member of the GuLF Scientific Advisory Board, I work with the study team to make sure the research we are doing is well planned and carried out correctly. However, the GuLF STUDY is important to me on another level. I live in New Orleans and I am a Professor at Tulane University and Xavier University of Louisiana. What has happened and what will happen in the Gulf matters to me because I live here too. I lost my home to Hurricane Katrina and experienced the recovery effects of that disaster personally. The GuLF STUDY is working to learn about the effects of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, but we need everyone's help. When you complete the survey, you are providing your input and you help us learn about the effects of the oil spill. Working together, we can make things better for future generations."*

## Current Research

### Reproductive and Child Health



Stephanie Engel, PhD  
Gulf STUDY Collaborator  
UNC School of Public Health

Dr. Stephanie Engel is a professor at the University of North Carolina and a GuLF STUDY collaborator. She has studied how environmental exposures experienced by mothers or fathers during and immediately following pregnancy affect reproductive health and child development. The second health follow-up includes questions that will help Dr. Engel and the study team explore these issues in the GuLF STUDY. This research will help us learn how spills affect pregnancies and the health of children.

### Mental Health



Richard Kwok, PhD  
Gulf STUDY Investigator  
NIEHS

Dr. Richard Kwok is leading studies of the mental health effects of the oil spill. Prior studies have shown mental health issues are common among people affected by disasters, but less is known about mental health after oil spills. Dr. Kwok's research has already shown that participants with higher exposure to oil chemicals or potentially stressful job experiences were more likely to experience depression or PTSD. The findings suggest that mental health services should be provided to workers before and after disasters to minimize the effects of depression and PTSD. His current research is looking at how mental health changes over time and who is most likely to be affected.

### Kidney and Liver Function



Larry Engel, PhD  
GuLF STUDY Investigator  
UNC School of Public Health

Dr. Larry Engel is analyzing biological specimens provided in the home visit to understand how the spill exposures affect the body. He is currently using blood and urine samples from the home visit and clinical exam to learn whether or not spill exposures change liver and kidney function. He is looking at standard clinical measures, as well as newer measures that provide information on very early changes that could suggest later risk for disease.