Hazard Evaluation System & Information Service (HESIS)

HESIS Annual Report 2024-2025



Occupational Health Branch

CDPH
California Department of Public Health

About

The Hazard Evaluation System and Information Service, or HESIS, was established in 1978 by California Labor Code 147.2. HESIS is located within the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Occupational Health Branch (OHB), and is supported by an interagency agreement with the California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR). The HESIS annual budget for July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025 was $2,982,139; the current budget, for July 2025 to June 2026 is $3,176,852.

HESIS work reflects its original legislative mandate to "establish and operate a repository of current data on toxic materials and harmful physical agents in use or potentially in use in places of employment in the state." HESIS's mission is to identify, evaluate, and provide "early warning" and up-to-date, practical information on toxic chemicals and other workplace hazards. This information and the toxicological, technical, and medical expertise HESIS provides enable employers, workers, health and safety professionals, and others to take action to make workplaces safer.

This report describes HESIS's major activities from November 1, 2024 to October 31, 2025 . These activities include (i) how HESIS operates as a reliable source of technical assistance in the public health and occupational health and safety communities, (ii) how HESIS staff investigate new and unrecognized workplace hazards, and (iii) HESIS's role in supporting DIR's Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) in promulgating protective occupational health and safety standards. The report highlights HESIS's major accomplishments and provides examples of HESIS work with partners on public health projects and activities to improve workplace safety and health in California during 2024-2025.

> "The Department of Industrial Relations shall submit a report to the Legislature detailing the implementation and operation of HESIS including, but not limited to, the amount and source of funds allocated and spent on repository activities, the toxic materials and harmful physical agents investigated during the past year and recommendations made concerning them, actions taken to inform interested persons of the possible hazards of exposure to toxic materials and harmful physical agents, and any recommendations for legislative changes relating to the functions of HESIS."
> - California Labor Code 147.2 (g)

HESIS Mission

This section describes HESIS activities in general terms; the rest of the report will provide examples and notable highlights from the year.

Provide reliable hazard information

HESIS is a well-known and trusted source of occupational health and toxicological information on workplace hazards; many individuals and groups turn to us when they need help or answers to their questions. Cal/OSHA relies on HESIS to provide top-rate technical assistance and guidance on a range of topics for its rulemaking, enforcement, and educational activities. HESIS staff regularly review Cal/OSHA and other agency guidance documents, contribute to scientific publications, and present at meetings and conferences.

HESIS places a high priority on providing information that is of practical use. HESIS operates the Workplace Hazard Helpline (Telephone Response System or TRS), a toll-free telephone number that workers, employers, physicians, and others in California use to ask questions about the health effects of chemicals, potential workplace exposures, regulatory standards, and workers' rights. HESIS works with a variety of partners to address new or underappreciated workplace hazards; this can include developing and disseminating new informational products and materials.

Establish health effects of potentially harmful workplace exposures

HESIS plays a critical role in identifying new or unappreciated workplace hazards to provide early warning and protect worker health. HESIS staff collect and evaluate toxicological studies and other relevant information to identify chemicals and physical agents that may be harmful to worker health. We use peer-reviewed scientific literature, published reports, and various databases to ascertain whether harmful substances are being used in California workplaces and, if so, how much. HESIS provides this information to other occupational and public health agencies, Cal/OSHA, local health jurisdictions, employers, and health and safety advocates. HESIS staff also provide technical assistance to other agencies on hazard evaluations of selected chemicals or workplace exposures.



Develop strategies for hazard reduction and disease prevention

HESIS uses its authority under California's Senate Bill 193 of 2014 to obtain customer lists from manufacturers who sell products that represent newly recognized health hazards for California workplaces. We use this information to contact companies where the products are being used to conduct targeted hazard evaluations, develop prevention recommendations, and provide information employers and workers can use to improve safety and health at their workplaces.

HESIS staff provide extensive support to CDPH whenever it must respond to a public health emergency that involves workplace health and safety. We develop workplace guidance; review draft regulations and guidance from other state agencies; respond to questions from health care facilities, local health jurisdictions, and the public; and participate in developing and disseminating critical health education materials about the emergency.

Support the development of occupational safety and health standards

HESIS supports the work of the Cal/OSHA Health Effects Advisory Committee (HEAC) in the development of permissible exposure limits (PELs) for airborne contaminants, published in the California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 5155. HESIS staff obtain and analyze data to evaluate harmful chemical exposures in California workplaces. We provide toxicological information and make recommendations for new or revised PELs. HESIS also conducts its own research and submits recommendations to minimize exposure to harmful airborne contaminants not yet recognized or addressed by the HEAC. HESIS provides similar support for Cal/OSHA standard-setting on other workplace hazards by providing technical assistance to other standard advisory committees. We assist Cal/OSHA staff with evaluating complex technical data for the purpose of developing standard language and responding to inquiries, statements, and proposals from stakeholders.



HESIS Activities 2024-2025

In the sections of the report that follow, we provide highlights and examples of the ways that HESIS fulfilled its traditional mandates related to toxic materials and contributed to CDPH's emergency response for infectious disease. We also include information on planned HESIS activities for the future.



Provide Reliable Hazard Information

Preventing reproductive or developmental harm from workplace chemicals

HESIS responded to a call on the workplace hazard helpline from a worker at a plastic products company in California who requested information on how to clean a chemical spill of N-methyl-2-pyrrolidone (NMP) on the laboratory floor. NMP is a solvent that can be harmful if it contacts the skin or is inhaled and can harm both male and female reproductive systems. HESIS provided step-by-step instructions for proper cleanup of the NMP spill site and provided a link to the HESIS publication on NMP Health Hazard Advisory for further information.

HESIS also responded to a physician's inquiry about a patient with chronically elevated blood lead levels (4-6.4 mcg/dL). The discussion included potential occupational and non-occupational exposures, and considerations regarding mildly elevated blood lead levels. An informational fact sheet on jobs, hobbies, and other sources of lead exposure was provided and it was recommended that the patient be seen by an occupational and environmental health clinic.

Reducing transmission of infectious diseases through improved indoor air quality (IAQ)

HESIS staff promoted ventilation best practices and strategies to improve IAQ in a variety of workplace settings by continuing to educate internal and external partners. Over the period, HESIS:



- Provided an IAQ training at a bimonthly Skilled Nursing Infection Prevention call organized by the Monterey County Department of Public Health on the placement of portable air cleaners during respiratory virus outbreaks in skilled nursing facilities in June 2025.
- Shared "Improving Indoor Air Quality for Health and Energy Efficiency: Challenges and Opportunities" in June 2025 at a public forum held by Bay Area Regional Energy Network (BayRen), a coalition of sustainability representatives from nine Bay Area counties that promote energy efficiency, healthy buildings, and regional resilience. It was attended by 100 cross-sectoral professionals.
- Trained 30 skilled nursing facility maintenance directors in April 2025 on "Improving Indoor Air Quality to Reduce Respiratory Virus Transmission in Skilled Nursing Facilities" through the California Association of Healthcare Facilities Spring Maintenance Director's Conference in Burbank.
- Educated colleagues from the CDPH Immunization Branch and Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) Program in May and July 2025 on the principles of "shared airspaces" within building ventilation systems and airborne contaminant removal efficiency, concepts that are crucial in conducting contact tracing following measles outbreaks in healthcare settings and schools.
- Presented "Improving Indoor Air Quality in Schools: Lessons Learned for COVID-19 & Beyond" in March 2025 to over 60 participants of a Santa Clara County Office of Education Youth Health & Wellness Initiative meeting. During this presentation, HESIS staff also shared new IAQ workforce training modules aimed at facility management workers, which HESIS staff developed in collaboration with other departments within CDPH and University of California, Davis (UC Davis).
- Highlighted and shared the IAQ workforce training modules developed by CDPH-UC Davis, available on the UC Davis Indoor Air Quality website in November 2024, during a Health Services Advisory Group webinar.

Establish Health Effects of Harmful Workplace Exposures

Collecting and evaluating toxicological and epidemiological data

- With support from a CDPH contract with the Los Angeles County Public Health Library, HESIS continued electronic peer-reviewed literature and documents delivery to Cal/OSHA's Research and Standards Unit.

- HESIS continued to compile research in its electronic repository through review of table-of-contents alerts in toxicology, industrial hygiene, epidemiology and occupational medicine journals, as well as evidence-based reports from sources such as national professional societies. HESIS also followed the activities of authoritative agencies to identify emerging hazards and issues. These agencies included The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Toxicology Program, as well as the International Agency for Research on Cancer, and the European Chemicals Agency.

- HESIS staff examined occupational contributions to respiratory health disparities for COVID-19 along with other longer-term health impacts through original research:
  - Prevalence and Risk Factors for Long COVID among California Workers Captured by a Doctor's First Report-Based Surveillance System, published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
  - COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy and Uptake Among California Workers in 2020-2022, published in the American Journal of Industrial Medicine

> *"HESIS shall fulfill the following functions: Collect and evaluate toxicological and epidemiological data and any other information, which may be pertinent to establishing harmful effects on the health of workers exposed to toxic materials or harmful physical agents"*
> *- California Labor Code 147.2 (c)*

Develop Strategies for Hazard Reduction and Disease Prevention

Silicosis

Workers cutting, grinding, or polishing engineered stone to fabricate countertops face high risk of exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) and accelerated silicosis. Cases of silicosis among immigrant workers within the countertop fabrication industry are notable for workers' young age at onset and poor health outcomes, including lung transplantation and premature death. HESIS and other OHB staff have participated in several efforts to address this significant and emerging hazard.

- Provided a statewide perspective on silicosis from engineered stone to Orange County representatives from the U.S. Congress, the Board of Supervisors, the county health department, medical providers, academic occupational and environmental clinics, community clinics and industry in January and June 2025.

- Developed health care provider guidance on the new silica standard – particularly on the type of computed tomography (CT) testing needed, what to report, and what questions they need to ask workers. Once approved, an employee questionnaire and report templates for employers and employees will be provided to health professionals.



Photo Credit: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

- Presented webinars to California occupational health care providers including the Western Occupational and Environmental Medicine Association (WOEMA) and Concentra Occupational Health Clinics, on the new Cal/OSHA silica standard in December 2024 and March 2025, respectively. The updates for clinicians included information on the new medical surveillance requirements and reporting requirements.

- Gave a Grand Rounds presentation on Silicosis in Countertop Workers at St. Peter's University Hospital in New Brunswick, NJ, in September 2025. The audience included medical specialists in Internal Medicine, Pulmonary, Infectious Disease, and other specialties.

- Co-chaired an American Thoracic Society international workshop on silicosis related to the use of engineered stone to fabrication countertops. The workshop includes 24 experts in medicine, epidemiology, industrial hygiene, toxicology, industrial hygiene, public health, history of science, sociology, and labor policy from eight different countries around the world. The workshop consisted of four virtual sessions focused on exposure science, clinical considerations, health equity, and policy approaches. The first two sessions were held in April 2025 and the second two in June 2025. A workshop report will be generated and published in the Annals of the American Thoracic Society.

- Researched alternatives to engineered stone (ES) products by assessing the toxicology literature on amorphous silica and gathering relevant information from Safety Data Sheets on alternatives, including newly introduced "low silica" materials, to identify specific components of ES alternatives.

- Evaluated a new data source that aggregates shipment records for imports of ES to the U.S. to understand the supply chain within California.

- Met with representatives of the Los Angeles County Department of Health along with architects and designers as part of outreach efforts to increase awareness of ES silicosis.

- Progressed further in the NIOSH-funded California Artificial Stone and Silicosis (CASS) Project study in collaboration with Olive View-University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Medical Center. The CASS Project aims to increase awareness, facilitate medical monitoring and enhance public health surveillance related to artificial stone.
  - Recruited and enrolled 55 workers in the study as of September 2025.
  - Conducted multi-source surveillance to characterize the nature, burden, and trends of silicosis among California workers published as a peer-reviewed article entitled "Silicosis Surveillance in California, 2019-2024: Tracking an Epidemic" in the American Journal of Public Health.
  - As of October 30, 2025, there have been 425 cases of silicosis associated with engineered stone, 23 deaths and 47 transplants reported to CDPH. Weekly updates are available on OHB's California Engineered Stone Silicosis Surveillance Dashboard.
  - Added silicosis to the state's Title 17 list of reportable conditions in July 2025, which requires healthcare providers to report cases of silicosis to public health.



Photo Credit: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

COVID-19 and other aerosol-transmissible diseases

HESIS staff have contributed to efforts to address COVID-19 and other aerosol transmissible diseases in the workplace.

- Responded to questions from employers about implementing COVID-19 and other respiratory disease infection control programs. For example:
  - HESIS answered questions from a veterinarian at a zoo and provided recommendations for their COVID vaccination and return-to-work policies for their animal care and veterinary staff and included information on the remaining Cal/OSHA record-keeping requirement.

- HESIS also responded to a question from a medical director at a large medical center about the need to notify employees who may have been exposed to patients diagnosed with COVID-19 in their ambulatory or inpatient sites. HESIS responded that the Cal/OSHA Aerosol Transmissible Diseases (ATD) standard does require them to notify employees with significant exposure "within a timeframe that is reasonable for the specific disease, as described in subsection (h)(6)(B), but in no case later than 96 hours of becoming aware of the potential exposure."

- Developed and shared new tools for epidemiologic assessment of COVID-19 along with other workplace transmissible diseases:
  - To assess exposure surrogates for aerosolization, respiratory rates, hot and cold work environments, HESIS staff and others in OHB used information from the Occupational Information Network and published literature to develop a job exposure matrix for epidemiology studies. The tool development was published as an article entitled "Extending a COVID-19 Job Exposure Matrix: The SARS-CoV-2 or COVID-19 Job Exposure Matrix Module (SCoVJEM Module) for Population-Based Studies" in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.
  - HESIS provided a California university researcher with a link to the OHB list of publications for download of the Close Physical Proximity Job Exposure Matrix dataset.

- Presented at the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) annual meeting in Grand Rapids, MI entitled "Post-Acute Sequelae COVID (PASC) Among California Workers' Compensation (WC) Claims Filed in 2020-2022."

Avian Influenza A(H5N1)

Since highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) A(H5N1) was first detected in U.S. birds in 2022, California has closely monitored its activity within the state. Though H5N1 viruses do not normally infect humans, zoonotic infections among those with exposure to H5N1 have occurred. CDPH, in collaboration with several agencies, provided guidance on protecting and monitoring the health of workers having exposures to sick or dead poultry, wild birds and dairy cows. HESIS continued to assist local health departments in communicating with commercial poultry and egg producers, dairy farm owners, farm workers, backyard flock owners, and wildlife care centers about the risk of zoonotic transmission from animals to humans of avian influenza A (H5N1), and on the protective measures needed, to prevent infection. To support local health jurisdictions (LHJ), HESIS provided guidance and assistance in conducting health checks with workers.



Photo Credit: California Department of Public Health

HESIS also participated in the multi-agency response with colleagues from the CDPH Infectious Diseases Emergency Response Branch, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, community-based organization partners, UC Davis Western Center for Agricultural Health and Safety, UC Merced Labor Center, and Cal/OSHA staff to continue informing farm owners and workers on potential risks for exposure to H5N1 and which protections to use within dairy and poultry farms. HESIS advised on the types of personal protective equipment (PPE) to distribute from the state stockpile and inform the response on possible conduits for distribution. HESIS also provided occupational health expertise in responding to stakeholder and media inquiries. Additionally, HESIS led the OHB effort to inform workers about the importance of respiratory protection and effective eye protection and to encourage them to inform the LHJ and get medical attention if they have signs/symptoms. HESIS did this through the following: preparing new guidance for wildlife care workers, Bird Flu Working with Wildlife; and creating and updating flyers for distribution to farm workers that described recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) to use when working with infected animals and symptom information, available on the CDPH website.

To further promote awareness of avian influenza, HESIS met with several organizations and agencies including the Division of Workers' Compensation to discuss methods for education on the work-relatedness of avian influenza, and with the State Compensation Insurance Fund and Zenith Insurance Company to discuss the potential for outreach to their dairy farm owner policy holders. HESIS also engaged several occupational health clinic networks in the Central Valley to increase awareness of testing and treatment of farm workers exposed to avian influenza.

With the goal of increasing knowledge and awareness of avian influenza, both nationally and in the California context, HESIS presented to:

- The CSTE Occupational Health Subcommittee at its Winter meeting, which took place in December 2024, with attendance from members of NIOSH and other state health departments. HESIS staff provided an overview of Avian influenza and its unique challenges as part of the H5N1 discussion panel.
- The Western Occupational & Environmental Medical Association (WOEMA) held in December 2024. HESIS staff presented a webinar entitled "Avian Influenza A (H5N1) for Healthcare Professionals."
- Agile Occupational Health, a large occupational healthcare system in California, on Avian Influenza for Healthcare Professionals in November 2024. The audience consisted of clinicians.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) forum, CDC State-Federal One Health Call for Affected States to Discuss HPAI in Dairy Cattle and Other Animals call in April 2025, where HESIS staff presented "Avian Influenza A(H5N1) Worker Monitoring in California 2024-2025." With over 150 participants, HESIS provided context for California including the number of dairy farms and relevant Cal/OSHA regulations and the process and tools used to monitor H5N1 symptoms among dairy workers.
- The occupational health nurses of the California El Camino Real Association of Occupational Health Nurses (CECRAOHN) where HESIS's occupational medicine physician covered several topics, including occupations at risk of exposure, how the disease is transmitted, the recommended PPE for farm workers, testing and treatment, and resources for clinicians.



Photo Credit: California Department of Public Health

HESIS generated new scientific knowledge on avian influenza by contributing to the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report article entitled "Human Cases of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A(H5N1) — California, September–December 2024." Additionally, as part of the National Academies of Science and Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) workshop planning committee, HESIS participated in "Personal Protective Equipment for Influenza A (H5N1) in High-Risk Farm Settings: A Workshop," which was held on September 29 and 30, 2025. This NASEM workshop provided the opportunity to exchange knowledge and ideas among technical experts, policy makers, livestock industry leaders and farm owners, and PPE users in farm settings (e.g., farmworkers, veterinarians). As part of the two-day virtual event, HESIS staff moderated a session on "Opportunities: Improving Existing PPE Access and Feasibility of Use" which featured an OHB speaker on "The Program for Respirator Outreach, Training, Education, and Community Testing (PROTECT)."

HESIS conducted additional outreach by contacting poultry, egg and swine producers, dairy farmers, and wildlife rehabilitation centers to encourage them to offer worksite seasonal flu vaccine clinics for their employees, contractors and volunteers. HESIS encouraged them to partner with their local health departments to hold on-site clinics or provide paid time for workers to receive flu vaccine. Farm and wildlife workers who work with avian influenza-infected animals were highly encouraged to receive the seasonal flu vaccine in the fall to minimize the possibility of simultaneous infection with seasonal flu and avian influenza. Infection with both viruses at the same time could result in the evolution and spread of hazardous new flu viruses.

To further understand preventative measures in practice, HESIS developed a proposal to conduct field investigations of recent or past affected dairy farms to observe work practices and interview workers about their knowledge of PPE use for prevention of avian influenza. As part of this work, HESIS prepared survey instruments for observations and employer and farm worker interviews. To date, HESIS staff have conducted three dairy farm visits as well as a visit to a calf ranch. OHB/HESIS will continue to contact farms to visit a minimum of five farms. The findings from the field visits are anticipated to be aggregated into a final CDPH report.



More recently as part of CDPH demobilization from the emergency response, HESIS assisted with questions pertaining to worker health and safety measures and updated guidance on worker monitoring. HESIS staff participated in the multi-agency review of state-wide H5N1 response activities to identify strategies for enhanced coordination in future zoonotic outbreaks.

Photo Credit: California Department of Public Health

Changing Climate and the California Landscape: Impact on Workers

California faces challenges in protecting its diverse workforce from the changing climate, more days of extreme heat at greater frequency and more wildfire days. HESIS envisions these impacts will intersect with other chemical, biological, and physical workplace hazards.

Wildfire Smoke and Heat

- Reviewed the literature and submitted comments to NIOSH on the "NIOSH Draft Hazard Review: Wildland Fire Smoke Exposure Among Farmworkers and Other Outdoor Workers." HESIS' comments centered on defining outdoor workers, conducting hazard and health surveillance, implementing exposure assessment, and considering mental health outcomes for inclusion into the draft hazard review.
- HESIS issued comments in support of Cal/OSHA proposed language changes addressing Assembly Bill 2243 (2022) Occupational safety and health standards: heat illness: wildfire smoke.
- Presented "Heat and Vulnerable Workers – Local and Global Impacts" at the UCSF Continuing Medical Education Course: Health, Occupation and the Environment: Global Issues and Local Action and Updates in Occupational and Environmental Medicine held in March 2025.
- Supported CDPH's emergency response to the January 2025 Los Angeles wildfires. As part of this response, a project was developed with UCLA to provide respiratory protection training, elastomeric respirators, and fit testing to day laborers and other workers involved in debris clean-up activities. As of September 2025, the project has conducted more than a dozen training sessions and trained over 300 participants, with the goal of ultimately reaching 650 participants.

Coccidioidomycosis ("Cocci" or "Valley fever")

- Updated the "Valley fever Tailgate Training Guide for California Construction Workers", in collaboration with CDPH Infectious Diseases Branch. Employers may use this to train workers on the eight topics required for Valley fever training under California Labor Code Section 6709. Staff also created a list of labor and trade contacts in the construction sector, to which the materials were distributed.
- Participated in a public health investigation of a solar project construction site with the county health department where CDPH had identified six workers who became ill with Valley fever and one worker who died. HESIS staff conducted a site visit, presented to workers, and provided recommendations for minimizing exposure to construction workers and for tracking and reporting work-related Valley fever illnesses.
- Conferred with colleagues in the CDPH Infectious Diseases Branch to provide recommendations for training farm workers on minimizing exposure to Coccidioides spores that can cause Valley fever.



Support the Development of Occupational Safety and Health Standards



Gathering information to support evidence-based standards

HESIS subject matter experts in toxicology, industrial hygiene, occupational medicine and epidemiology:

- Reviewed Cal/OSHA's proposed Infectious Diseases Standard and worked with Cal/OSHA to discuss CDPH feedback on the proposed standard language.
- Developed and submitted OHB comments to the Federal Register in response to proposed changes to the Federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration standards including the General Duty Clause and several chemicals: asbestos, benzene, dibromochloropropane, formaldehyde, methylene chloride, and vinyl chloride.
- Connected Cal/OSHA to expertise within CDPH who could assist with finding suitable, appropriate data sources to support the development of the surgical plume standard.
- Provided toxicology information for six phthalate compounds which are currently undergoing risk evaluation as part of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's existing chemical process under the Toxic Substances Control Act. This information included specific scientific references on potential phthalate replacements for Di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP), a carcinogen and a male developmental toxicant.
- Reviewed the toxicology information from peer-reviewed articles on the hazards from combustion at the urban/wildland interface.
- Requested California Environmental Reporting System (CERS) data for several chemicals (see table entitled "Chemicals for which HESIS provided support") and reviewed additional scientific literature for select chemicals (see additional activities).

Chemicals for which HESIS provided support

Chemical(s)	Additional activities
Tricholoroethylene	
2-methoxyethanol, o-toluene, malic anhydride	Sought and summarized toxicology literature for the HEAC.
Bisphenol A, acetaldehyde	
Eight insoluble aluminum compounds: aluminum, aluminum oxide, aluminum oxide hydrated, aluminum distearate, aluminum stearate, aluminum tristearate, lithium aluminum hydride, and sodium aluminum hydride Three soluble compounds: aluminum hydroxide, aluminate sulfate, and aluminum sodium oxide	Gathered peer-reviewed toxicology and epidemiology articles for aluminum and related compounds.

Bridging Occupational Health and Safety Expertise

Serving as an occupational health resource hub connecting partners in California and beyond

HESIS broadened educational outreach and collaboration with occupational health professionals, occupational medicine clinics and healthcare professionals through several of its activities over the year, for example:

- HESIS piloted case conferences along with academic partners to discuss clinical cases that may involve new and emerging workplace hazards. The aim of these conferences is to share knowledge and collaborate on potential projects. The inaugural joint interdisciplinary case conference was on exposure to metal-organic frameworks for use in carbon capture. The second conference focused on exposures to solvents, serving as an opportunity for HESIS to present regrettable substitutions and discuss the challenges of selecting alternative solvents.

- HESIS staff assisted both a county and city employer following a NIOSH Health Hazard Evaluation on sewage hazards, translating recommendations into practice.

- Provided technical assistance to a local health jurisdiction and air pollution district on a local portable air cleaner distribution program.

- With an eye towards mentorship, HESIS continued to grow the next generation of occupational health and safety professionals through its participation in the Occupational Health Internship Program (OHIP) program. HESIS staff mentored an OHIP intern on a project that focused on construction hazards identified through key-informant interviews with workers. HESIS also provided industrial hygiene subject matter expertise for two site visits to ES fabrication shops as part of another OHIP project.

- HESIS staff provided subject matter expertise by assisting a resident in Internal Medicine and Preventive Medicine from Kaiser Permanente with developing an educational material for clinicians on the intersection of tuberculosis and silicosis.

- HESIS presented updates on silica and lead at the Southern California Joint Technical Symposium in October 2025.

- HESIS attended an interagency meeting in October 2025 hosted by the California Department of Food and Agriculture to address rat infestations in Central Valley nut crops such as almonds and pistachios. Cal/OSHA's document on rodent infestations was provided to the CDPH Emergency Preparedness Coordinator.



What's Next for HESIS?

In the upcoming year, HESIS will continue to carry out its mandate to identify, evaluate, and provide "early warning" and up-to-date, practical information on toxic chemicals and other workplace hazards. Anticipated activities include the following:

Support Cal/OSHA

- Continue to provide research, technical assistance, and support to the HEAC in its current rulemaking process to recommend revised PELs.
- Gather usage and exposure information to assist with prioritization of chemicals and prepare toxicity summaries for new or revised PEL recommendations for the HEAC as needed.
- Support Cal/OSHA rulemaking across a range of exposures including surgical plume/smoke.

Provide Reliable Information

- Review emerging information about engineered stone products, including newly introduced "low silica" materials. Evaluate existing data on the composition of material and toxicology of these substitutes.
- Develop educational outreach and information about chemicals used in the workplace that are listed as causing cancer or reproductive and/or developmental toxicity under Proposition 65.
- Deliver occupational health subject matter expertise to workers, employers, local health jurisdictions, occupational health and safety professionals, and physicians for unrecognized hazards in the workplace.

Develop strategies for prevention

- Carry forward the aims of the California Artificial Stone and Silicosis (CASS) Project through increased awareness, improved diagnostics, and enhanced public health surveillance for silicosis.
- Examine emerging California industries, understand changes to work processes, and anticipate new chemicals that may affect California workers.
- Engage manufacturers, distributors, and end-users in finding and promoting safer alternatives and improving hazard communication about toxic chemicals.





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