



CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY
Mary Ann Swetland Center
for Environmental Health

The Swetland Scoop

September 2026

Our mission is to accelerate pathways to vibrant and healthy environments through collaborative research, immersive training, and authentic community engagement.

Expanding Produce Prescription (PRx) Access

Ensuring every Cuyahoga County patient who needs a produce prescription can get one.

Heart, Home & Harvest PRx Incubation Program

Through funding from our CDC-funded REACH grant in partnership with Cuyahoga County Board of Health, [Loiter East Cleveland](#) was selected for the "Small-Scale Incubation to Identify Best Practices for Locally Rooted PRx Models Award." Loiter's team partnered with [The Centers](#) and [Leg Up for Cleveland's Kids](#) to implement a 14-week PRx program which:

- Enrolled 41 patients at The Centers
- Hosted 15 produce distribution events at The Centers and Loiter
- Hosted 6 cooking demos/nutrition education classes
- Hosted 5 family movement classes

Participants reported they enjoyed **socializing** with the program staff, **trying new foods** and access to **high quality vegetables**. One participant attributes

Heart, Home & Harvest
Pick Yours Fresh Market Pass
Get access to fresh fruits and vegetables, healthy living support, and fun community activities — all at no cost!

Starts: May 30, 2026 Ends: July 25, 2026!

BY JOINING, YOU'LL GET:

- ✓ Fresh fruits and vegetables two times each week
- ✓ Convenient cooking classes with simple, low-cost meal ideas
- ✓ Nutrition tips for eating healthy on a budget
- ✓ Fun exercise and movement classes
- ✓ Community support in a welcoming environment
- ✓ Easy pick-up locations in East Cleveland
- ✓ Limited to the first 50 people to sign up

THIS PROGRAM CAN HELP YOU:

- ✓ Start to make health improvements
- ✓ Eat healthy from stores in your neighborhood
- ✓ Have more energy
- ✓ Stay active and moving
- ✓ Support your family's health

CALL TO FIND OUT MORE:



improvement in blood sugar levels to the food options the program offered.

[Learn More Here](#)

How do we align PRx with local farming capacity?

The Produce Prescription Working Group, supported by our REACH project, conducted surveys and interviews with local farmers about their interest in partnering with PRx programs and establishing shared infrastructure and resources. The data brief, "**Shared Infrastructure for Locally Rooted PRx Programming in Cuyahoga County**," highlights what we learned:

1. Local farmers have the capacity to supply produce to local PRx programs, and can support increased demand with the right support.
2. To integrate local food into PRx programs, shared infrastructure is needed.
3. More work is needed to determine how this shared infrastructure might be funded and how local policies can be supportive.

[Download Report Here](#)

News & Announcements

Healthy Choices Mini Grant Awardees

The Healthy Choices Mini Grants provided one-time investments to help organizations expand healthy eating and active living opportunities for Ohioans participating in or eligible for SNAP. Mini grants helped communities implement practical strategies to:

- Increase access to healthy foods
- Promote healthier food choices
- Encourage active living
- Build long-term community capacity to support SNAP participants and SNAP-eligible residents.

[65](#) mini grant projects were funded, serving [270](#) community sites across [26](#) counties through [\\$202,274](#) of investments.

The Mini Grant Projects expanded healthy eating and active living in trusted community settings, including:

- Food Pantries
- Farmers Markets
- Early Childhood Education Centers
- K-12 Schools
- Community Gardens

The full list of Ohio organizations receiving a Healthy Choices Mini Grant is [here](#).

Join Us at the PRx Convening: September 24th

Join us for dinner and conversations with farmers, nutrition educators, healthcare providers, funders, health insurance providers, and others interested in produce prescriptions. Build relationships with new partners to ensure anyone in Cuyahoga County who needs a produce prescription can receive one, no matter where they receive health care.



- **Date:** Thursday, September 24, 2026
- **Time:** 5:30 - 8:00 PM
- **Location:** Loiter, 15011 Euclid Avenue, East Cleveland, OH 44112
- **Cost:** Free

[RSVP Here](#)

Join our September 15th Seminar

"Mom as the Infant's Environment," presented by Dr. Shannon Conrey. This talk will explore how we look at maternal transfer of positive and negative exposures, ongoing research into these exposures and how the science is evolving to allow us to consider a wide definition of environment.

- **Date:** Tuesday, September 15, 2026
- **Time:** 9:00 - 10:00 AM
- **Location:** Virtual

[RSVP here](#)

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
Mary Ann Swetland Center
for Environmental Health

9/15/2026
9 - 10 AM
EST
Virtual

**REGISTER
HERE:**
tinyurl.com/915Seminar



**Accelerating
Progress Towards
Environmental
Health for All
Communities**

CASE.EDU/swetland

**Join us for the Swetland
Center Seminar**

Mom as the Infant's Environment



Shannon Conrey, PhD, MS
*Assistant Professor, Department of Population and Quantitative Health
Sciences, School of Medicine
Core Faculty, Mary Ann Swetland Center for Environmental Health
Faculty Associate, Schubert Center for Child Studies
Case Western Reserve University*

There is a lot of interest in understanding a lifetime's environmental exposures to assess risk of disease, but an infant's exposures are intimately connected to its mother's exposures. During pregnancy, mother and fetus share a blood supply, transferring needed nutrients, immune cells, hormones, and growth factors, but also environmental toxins, medications, and xenobiotics to the developing baby. After birth, the breastfed infant benefits from a highly digestible and perfectly formulated diet of human milk, but here, too, mom's exposures can influence the composition of her milk. Further, these exposures are not evenly distributed and a wide range of factors, including maternal metabolic health, neighborhood material deprivation, and family demographics can have an impact on maternal exposures and child health outcomes. This talk will explore how we look at maternal transfer of positive and negative exposures, ongoing research into these exposures and how the science is evolving to allow us to consider a wide definition of environment.

This is a free learning opportunity that is open to the public. Visit youtube.com/@swetlandcenter5524 for a complete video archive of the series.

Sign Up for the Upcoming Plastics and Health Forum

Save the Date: Friday, November 6, 2026

PLASTICS AND HEALTH REGIONAL FORUM

*Connecting Human, Environmental, and Great Lakes
Health in the Age of Plastic Pollution*

MidTown Collaboration Center
1974 E 66th St, Cleveland, OH

8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

[Learn More and
Register Here](#) →



Planning and Support from:

Cuyahoga County Board of Health
Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District
Case Western Reserve University: Master of Public Health Program,
Climate & Health Education Collaborative, and Siegal Lifelong Learning
Eco-Products
Mary Ann Swetland Center for Environmental Health
MetroHealth Hospital System
National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Program
Northeast Ohio Community Resilience Centre
Ohio Sea Grant

Hot off the Press

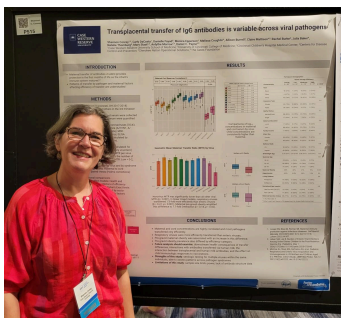
Our Latest Publications

Swetland Center Faculty, Staff, and/or Trainees are in Bold.

Lee, E.K., Gump, B.B., Cole, M.B., Titus, A.R., **Freedman, D.A.**, & Al-Kindi, S. (2026). **Redlining, urban heat, and climate hazards: Impacts on children's cardiometabolic health.** *Journal of Urban Health.*

Our Latest Presentations & Conferences

Swetland Center Faculty, Staff, and/or Trainees are in Bold.



Shannon Conrey, PhD, presented a poster, "Transplacental Transfer of IgG Antibodies is Variable across Viral Pathogens," at the Society for Epidemiological Research in Phoenix, Arizona. Findings revealed maternal antibodies against respiratory viruses were transferred to the fetus more efficiently than antibodies against enteric viruses, with maternal obesity appearing to widen this difference and potentially affecting infants' later immune health.

Anthony Orsino, a 2025-2026 Daniel Lewis Ravin, MD awardee, was selected to take part in the UC Dublin RX One Health program in Ireland. Orsino joined a cohort of 32 professionals and 19 students to study how the environment, animal health,



and human health intersect over a variety of settings and complex problems across Ireland.

In the News

Swetland Center Faculty, Staff, and/or Trainees are in Bold.

Nikita Das, MD, a 2024-25 Daniel Lewis Ravin, MD awardee, recently published an op-ed focused on the link between schizophrenia and incarceration. Her piece highlights the importance of holistic environmental health frameworks for mental health.

"For too long, public policy has treated mental illness and incarceration as parallel crises. This study makes clear they are, in fact, the same crisis viewed from different angles. Efforts to reduce incarceration, improve public safety, and advance health equity will remain incomplete unless they address the clinical and social realities that drive individuals into the justice system."

Das, N. (July 29, 2026). [Opinion: When illness becomes a sentence](#). Cleveland.com.

Nikita Das, MD is a recent graduate of Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. She is now embarking on a neurosurgery residency at UCLA in California.

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Andrew Curtis, PhD provided an outsider perspective as families in Medina County, Ohio explore the link between environmental exposures and cancer risk.

"If they [community members] really do feel there is a problem here [with the landfill], it should be investigated."

Fleischer, P. (August 18, 2026). [Something's wrong': Medina County families demand answers after cancer diagnoses](#). WKYC News.

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Darcy Freedman, PhD and **Vennila Ramasubramanian** shared highlights from the community food access summer internship program. Findings reveal the ripple effects of changes in SNAP policy on food retailers.

"By a year from now, it is not unlikely that we would have a loss of a store, a casualty of a food store, because there's just not enough money circling around to maintain the store."

Hack, C. (September 2, 2026). [Declined EBT cards and lost sales: CWRU students trace the impact of SNAP cuts](#). Signal Cleveland.

Swetland Spotlight

Ms. Toka Ivy, PRx Support Staff

A big thank you to Ms. Toka for her outstanding leadership during this summer's REACH-funded **Heart, Home & Harvest PRx Program**, a collaboration between Loiter and the Centers at East Cleveland.

Ms. Toka guided participants through produce selection, shared healthy recipes, and created a warm sense of community. In response, one participant shared the following when describing Ms. Toka, *"It's like I have a new food friend."*



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