

PLENARY SESSION

12th EPA International Decontamination Research & Development Conference: Highlighting What's to Come

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Dr. Gregory Sayles thanked Dr. McCabe and Dr. Cascio for their opening remarks, welcomed participants, and introduced himself. Dr. Sayles also thanked the Organizing Committee for all their work on the conference, and the speakers and participants. Dr. Sayles provided a brief history of the International Decontamination Research and Development Conference, which began in 2005 as a small gathering of researchers and coordinators.

Dr. Sayles continued by saying that the conference has grown, to the point that EPA facilities could no longer accommodate all the participants, and this year poses the new challenge of breaking ground with an entirely virtual conference. At the 2019 Decontamination Conference in Norfolk, Virginia, many participants were able to hear remarks from Dr. Robert Kadlec, then Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), just before the COVID-19 virus hit the United States, and those participants then went on to lead research on COVID-19 which will be highlighted in some of this year's concurrent sessions. One of the goals and success of this conference is to build connections across research and response organizations to enhance the work the participants contribute to, and many of the sessions will provide examples of cross-agency collaboration.

Dr. Sayles also highlighted the Student Poster Competition and the importance of support the next generation of researchers and first responders and encouraged all participants to engage. Dr Sayles introduced plenary speaker Mr. Nitin Natarajan.
