AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

APHA and its affiliates like the Vermont Public Health Association are building understanding and awareness of the public health implications of climate change. Those include worsened air quality, to changes in the spread of vector-borne diseases and devastation to communities due to extreme weather events like floods and hurricanes. We need strong climate change strategies and interventions that protect people's health. APHA supports the activities of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that play a critical role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, such as carbon pollution, and help our communities prevent and prepare for the serious health challenges posed by climate change.

Climate Change Threatens Human Health and Well-Being

We can act now to prevent disease and death

Climate Change Threatens Human Health

Extreme Heat	More frequent heat waves	Dehydration, heatstroke; aggravated respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses
Increased Frequency of Wildfires	More wildfire smoke; reduced air quality	Increased respiratory illness and hospitalizations
Poor Air Quality	Increased allergens; increased ground-level ozone and particulate matter air pollution	Increased allergy-related illnesses; respiratory and asthma complications
Vector-borne Disease	Expanded geographic range for pathogen-carrying insects	Increased risk of Lyme disease, dengue fever, West Nile virus
More Intense Storms and Flooding	Infrastructure destruction; property loss; water contamination	Injury and death; displacement- related mental health problems; waterborne illness

Existing Health Threats Worsen

- Vulnerable Populations Are Most at Risk
- Environmental justice problems are growing
- Climate change affects all regions of the US
    - Northwest: Increased wildfire risk, water supplies reduced by earlier snowmelt
    - Midwest: Increased heat wave intensity and frequency, degraded air/water quality
    - Northeast: Increased heat waves, coast flooding and river flooding
    - Southwest: Increased temperatures and decreased rainfall
    - Great Plains: Increased intensity and frequency of floods, droughts, heat waves
    - Southeast and the Caribbean: Increased heat waves/flooding from coastal storms
    - Alaska: Increased temperatures and wildfire risk
    - Hawaii and U.S. affiliated Pacific Islands: Increased temperatures, decreased rainfall and increased drought

Prevention and Preparedness Provide Protection

U.S. EPA Clean Energy Plan

- Slows climate change and reduces harmful pollutants in the air
- Cut power sector's heat-trapping carbon emissions 30% below 2005 levels
- More than 25% drop in particle pollution, nitrogen oxides and sulfur

Immediate Public Health Benefits

- Up to $93 billion saved
- 6,600 fewer premature deaths
- 150,000 asthma attacks in children avoided
- Up to 490,000 missed work or school days reclaimed

CDC Climate and Health Program

- Leads efforts to identify vulnerable populations to climate change
- Prevents and adapts to current and anticipated health impacts
- Assures that systems are in place to detect and respond to current and emerging health threats

Building Resilience Against Climate Effects

- Forecasts climate impacts and assesses vulnerabilities
- Projects future injury and disease rates
- Assesses and identifies suitable health interventions
- Creates and implements climate and health adaptation plans
- Evaluates impacts to improve adaptation activities

Role of State and local Health Departments

Investigate

- Compile local climate change threats
- Assess the built environment
- Identify vulnerable communities

Prepare

- Increase education and awareness
- Develop key health indicators
- Create response plans

Respond

- Implement disaster response activities
- Distribute toolkits
- Manage health centers (food, water, vaccines, cooling)

Non-Health Sector Changes Offer Multiple Benefits

Clean Energy

Reduces air pollution along with greenhouse gas emissions: Fewer respiratory diseases, heart attacks, deaths

Healthy Communities

Provide access to active transportation and green space and reduce urban heat, reduce air pollution: Reduction cardiovascular diseases, reduce obesity

Agriculture

Increases consumption of fruits and vegetables, reduces red meat consumption: reduces livestock-related greenhouse gas emission