



Climate Change is a Health Emergency

A Declaration on Climate Change and Health

2019

As leading public health, environmental health, patient advocacy, healthcare, nursing and medical organizations, we declare climate change a health emergency and call for immediate action to protect the public's health from the current and future impacts of climate change. Our organizations agree that:

- The health impacts of climate change demand **immediate action**.
- The **science is clear**; communities across the nation are **experiencing the health impacts** of climate change, including:
 - Enhanced conditions for **ozone** and **particulate** air pollution, linked to asthma attacks, cardiovascular disease and premature death;
 - **Extreme weather patterns**, such as **heat** and **severe storms** that destabilize communities and reduce access to essential healthcare;
 - **Wildfires** and dangerous wildfire smoke that spreads for thousands of miles;
 - Increased **vector-borne diseases** by expanding seasons and geographic ranges for ticks, mosquitoes and other disease-carrying insects; and
 - Longer and more intense allergy seasons.
- Those **most at risk** – including children, seniors, pregnant women, low-income communities, some communities of color, people with disabilities and people with chronic disease – disproportionately bear the health impacts of climate change.

- Urgent action is needed to address climate change by **cleaning up** major sources of carbon pollution and other greenhouse gases, including power plants, cars, trucks and other mobile sources. These policies must:
 - Adopt science-based targets to prevent climate change above 1.5 C;
 - Maximize benefits to health, reducing carbon and methane pollution at the same time that they reduce other dangerous emissions from polluting sources;
 - Ensure pollution is cleaned up in all communities, including those near polluting sources that have historically borne a disproportionate burden from air pollution; and
 - Leave the Clean Air Act fully in place. Any policy to address climate change must not weaken or delay the Clean Air Act or the authority that it gives EPA to reduce carbon emissions.
- Communities must also have the tools and resources **to identify, prepare for and adapt to the unique health impacts** of climate change in their communities.
 - Our public and environmental health systems must have adequate resources to protect communities by identifying, preparing for and responding to the health impacts of climate change.
 - We must ensure our community leaders can adequately protect those whose health is most at risk, and provide access to uninterrupted, quality healthcare during and after disasters.
- **We call on President Trump, EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler, and members of Congress** to heed the clear scientific evidence and take steps now to reduce pollution that drives climate change and harms health.
- The public health, environmental health, patient advocacy, healthcare, nursing and medical community are **united in our efforts to combat climate change and to protect the public's health from current and future climate impacts.**

Signed

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
 American Academy of Pediatrics
 American College of Physicians
 American Lung Association
 American Public Health Association
 Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
 Climate for Health
 National Environmental Health Association
 National Medical Association
 Physicians for Social Responsibility
 Trust for America's Health