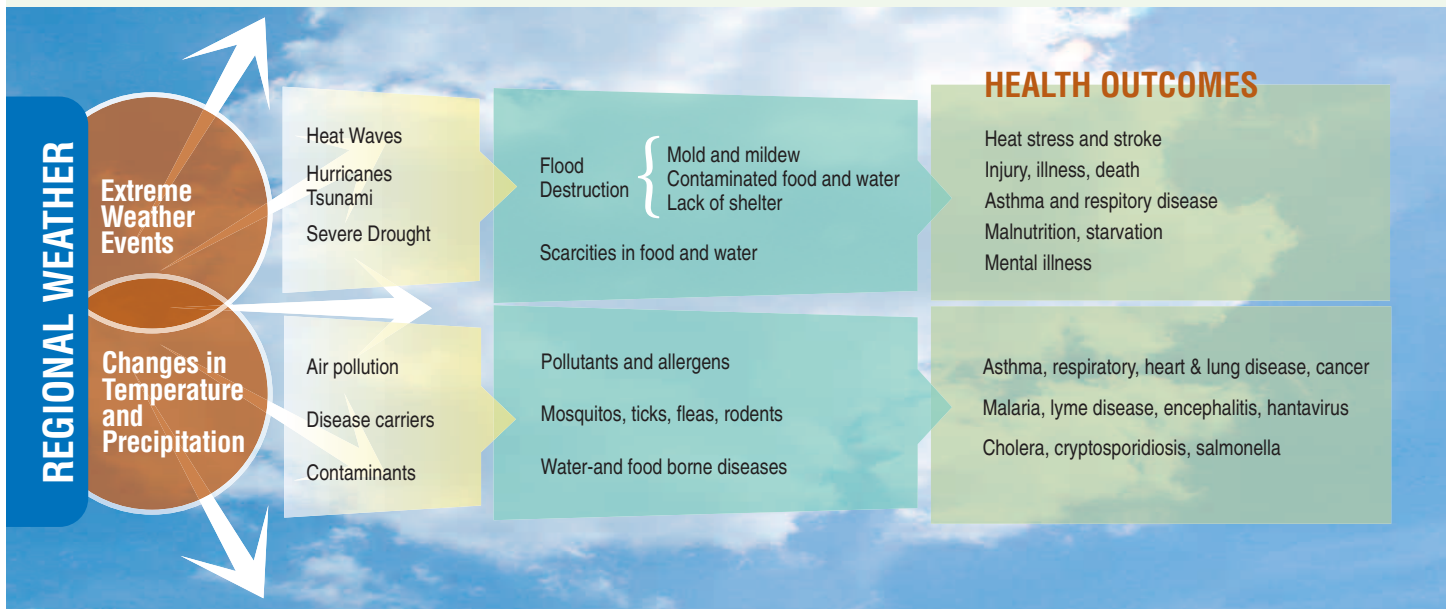


# Climate Change

is a public health issue

The climate is changing and these changes impact the nation's health. The ebb and flow of disease is linked to our climate. Scientists estimate changes are leading to increases in disease and death. For example, warm weather and precipitation changes are associated with increases in West Nile virus.

## How Can Climate Change Harm the Public's Health?



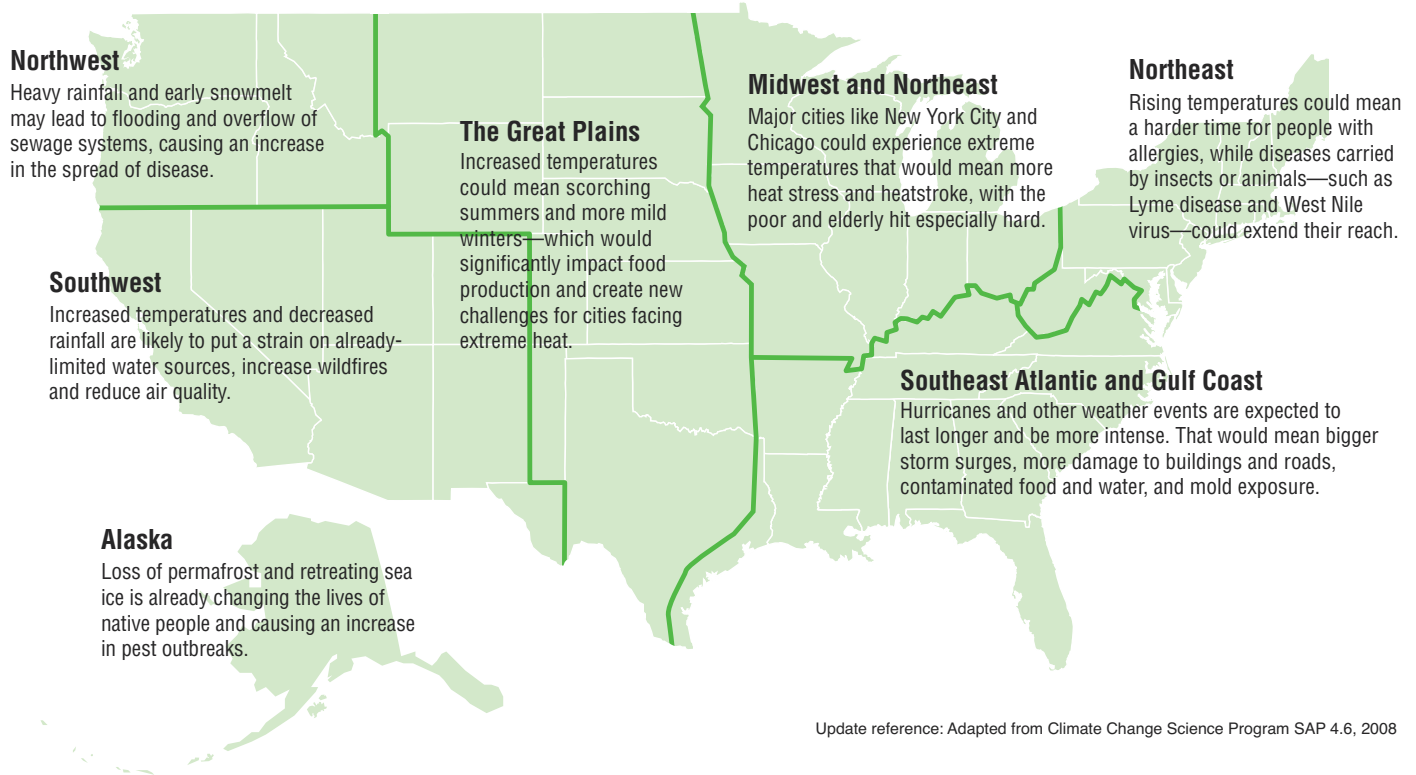
Adapted from Climate Change Science Program SAP 4.6, 2008

## Vulnerable Populations Will Bear the Burden

Populations already at increased risk from death and disease such as communities of color, the elderly, young children, and the poor, will bear the burden of disease and death from climate change. The existing conditions that already cause worse health among these populations – lack of clean air, water and unhealthy living conditions – will be exacerbated by the adverse effects of climate change.

Communities located in particularly sensitive areas – Alaska and arid western states – are also uniquely vulnerable to the effects of climate change. These communities are not only at increased risk for disease, they are also the least able to prepare, respond and recover from effects of climate change.

## Examples of Regional Effects of Climate Change



## Investment in the Public Health System *Saves Lives and Money*

Investing in our public health system to help understand, prevent, respond and adapt to the impacts of climate change is critical to the health of our nation. Investment will support:

- **Research** to better understand the domestic and global health impacts of climate change and to identify adaptive strategies
- **Infrastructure and capacity** for state and local health agencies to prepare and respond to climate change
- **Centers of Excellence** that use research results to inform state and local planning and adaptation
- **Early Warning Systems** to ensure swift responses to protect the public's health
- **Enhanced zoning** ordinances and building codes to prevent storm damage and minimize heat impacts
- **Robust prevention and control programs** to keep food and water safe from contamination and prevent the spread of vector borne disease
- **Nationwide detection and surveillance systems** to identify and prevent the spread of current and emerging diseases
- **Public policies** to adapt to climate change and to mitigate longer-term threats of climate change (e.g. policies that support sustainable communities, promote clean energy use, reduce air pollution and increase fitness)

