

CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY



VISION

Climate change is a national priority with broad political and social support. Our nation will address it in ways that improve public health and health equity, creating the healthiest nation in one generation.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Awareness: Everyone in the United States, beginning with the public health field, recognizes the urgency of practices, policies and individual choices that improve health outcomes and help address climate change, and they take action to advance and adopt those actions.

Enabling environment: Our culture, motivation and enabling environment make “climate healthy” and health equity choices easy choices.

Policy: Environmental justice and health equity are central to policies designed to address climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Science: Multidisciplinary science and its interpretation clarify the health impacts of both climate change and solutions/policies and guide decision-making.

Leadership: APHA is recognized as the leading voice around the connection between climate change and health.

STRATEGIC PLAN

APHA engaged public health and environmental leaders to assess the opportunities for the public health community and its constituencies to drive climate solutions. That engagement revealed the following strategies as priorities:

1 SHIFT THE NARRATIVE about climate change to speak to people’s values regarding their health and that of their families and loved ones.

2 SERVE AS A SCIENCE AND POLICY RESOURCE to inform sound policies and decision-making and to evaluate the health equity impacts of those policies.

3 INFLUENCE AND ADVANCE CLIMATE POLICIES that promise to have the greatest impact on environmental justice and health equity outcomes.

4 GALVANIZE ACTION to advance climate-healthy practices and behaviors that will make the greatest impact on public health and health equity.

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SHIFT THE NARRATIVE about climate change to speak to people's values regarding their health and that of their families and loved ones.

1

- Conduct research to understand how the public's values regarding their health connect with climate solutions and to learn how messaging, messengers and strategies may engage new audiences.
- Craft messaging that connects climate change to people's deeply held values regarding health, thereby making the issue tangible and local.
- Segment and map audiences that have the greatest potential to bring about change, and determine what is known about their motivations, current barriers to action and core channels/messengers for engaging them.
- Conduct influencer mapping (of individuals, institutions and coalitions) to learn which stakeholders have the greatest potential to accelerate impact, including both those that are currently working on the issue and those that have unrealized alignment with the cause.
- Generate messaging tools and resources—in accordance with those prioritized by stakeholders within the field—to help stakeholders talk about and champion this work.
- Leverage on-the-ground colleagues and members to prioritize and recruit public health, health care, wellness and other professionals as advocates in climate change discourse and decision-making.
- Engage non-health entities (e.g., environmental, energy, education, economic justice and other organizations) to infuse their messaging with a public health lens.
- Ultimately, drive adoption among high-value “grass-tops” stakeholders and influencers, such as through presentations at key conferences, thought leadership, briefings for key influencers and sparking earned media placements and social media engagement.

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SERVE AS A SCIENCE AND POLICY RESOURCE to inform sound policies and decision-making and to evaluate the health equity impacts of those policies.

2

- Interpret, translate and package existing research and data in ways that make that information accessible to professionals and nonprofessionals, including recommendations about how to translate findings into action (e.g., model policy language, briefing papers, talking points, infographics).
- Serve as a catalyst for expanding science to fill research gaps—for example, by commissioning research, influencing other national associations to host relevant conference themes, influencing research funders, and submitting recommendations on calls for research to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Transportation, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, among others.
- Leverage science to develop the criteria for prioritizing and advocating for policies, practices and behaviors that address climate change and its health impacts (to inform strategies 3 and 4).

INFLUENCE AND ADVANCE CLIMATE POLICIES that promise to have the greatest impact on environmental justice and health equity outcomes.

3

- Establish the climate change and health policy agenda (for federal, state, regional and local levels) to address the health impacts and health disparities resulting from climate change.
- Document and disseminate best practices for policy interventions among cities and rural communities alike.
- Advocate for improvements in priority climate change policies to increase their support for environmental justice and health equity.
- Advance advocacy (through integration with strategy 1) by marshaling key advocates and influencers to champion priority policies.

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GALVANIZE ACTION to advance climate-healthy practices and behaviors that will make the greatest impact on public health and health equity.

4

- Prioritize climate-healthy actions and behaviors, informed by what is known about the stakeholders best poised to motivate change and ways to overcome barriers to action (as assessed through strategy 1).
- Model and encourage behaviors—thereby reinforcing cultural expectations and advancing prioritized practices and behaviors—by engaging early adopters, influencers and cultural exemplars (e.g., trusted messengers, nurses, entertainers) in conjunction with awareness-building efforts through strategy 1.
- Inform science agendas (strategy 2) to elucidate ways to further advance prioritized practices and behaviors.
- Lead by example by lessening APHA’s climate footprint, while documenting what is learned in the process to benefit and inspire other organizations in the sector.
- Engage existing coalitions and bring new coalitions into the fold that have unrealized alignment with these issues in order to advance practices and behaviors and deliver health-related messages to their constituencies.



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