30 Years NPHW

Building Resilience for Health

Climate change impacts both physical and mental health through rising temperatures, poor air quality, extreme weather events and disrupted ecosystems. These effects are felt most in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods, which have faced years of underinvestment and systemic inequities, making them more vulnerable to climate risks. However, there is hope and a clear path forward. By taking bold and equitable action, we can reduce the health effects of climate change and build stronger, healthier communities. Solutions include rapidly transitioning to clean energy, improving energy efficiency, and supporting sustainable food systems.

CLIMATE ACTION STARTS WITH...

YOU

Staying prepared

As the climate changes, longer allergy seasons, increased pests and extreme heat are becoming more common. Be prepared by staying informed about pollen levels and pest risks and include these factors in your emergency preparedness plan. Know when to limit outdoor activities during high pollen days or heat waves to protect your health. Identify safe spaces in case of extreme weather and take steps to keep your home and family safe from pests like ticks and mosquitos.

Becoming a climate for health ambassador

The Climate for Health Ambassadors Training is a free online training designed to build your climate and health knowledge. You can learn how to communicate and encourage action on climate, health and equity.

COMMUNITY / NEIGHBORHOOD

Supporting local climate education and awareness

Join or organize community workshops, school programs, or public talks about climate change and sustainable practices. Educating residents on climate issues and solutions can foster greater action and help build community-wide support for climate initiatives. Utilize APHA's Climate and Health Youth Education Toolkit to give guest lectures at your local school.

Creating trauma-informed community support initiatives

The intensity of extreme weather events like flooding and storms is leading to adverse mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder in communities. To build community-wide

mental resilience and heal trauma, local coalitions and community organizations can create a diverse set of activities that are group-oriented, adaptable and culturally appropriate (e.g., support groups, healing circles, expressive therapies, nature-based therapies, memorial events, etc.) for various ages and backgrounds.

CITY / STATE

Investing in disaster preparedness and response

City and state emergency management programs should work with public health and communities to prepare, respond, and recover effectively from climate-related disasters. This can include supporting community resilience hubs that provide cooling stations, emergency supplies, and educational resources to help communities prepare for climate-related disasters.

Building resilient cities for all

Cities and states should invest in climate-friendly transportation options such as accessible public transit or walking or biking for short trips. They can adopt "Smart Surfaces" to combat extreme heat, flooding, and air pollution. Smart Surfaces improve public health and save cities money by reducing overall energy costs and minimizing damage from extreme weather.

NATION

Phasing out fossil fuels and transition to renewable energy

Fossil fuel-driven air pollution increases the risk of health conditions including lung disease, heart disease, depression and poor birth outcomes. Most of the fossil fuel supply chain and infrastructure are located in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods. The fastest and most equitable approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution is to stop using fossil fuels and end new exploration for oil.

Increasing access to affordable and energy-efficient housing

The federal government can take the lead in addressing energy insecurity by expanding access to affordable and energy-efficient housing. Low-income communities often face high energy costs and struggle to maintain proper heating and cooling, which impacts their health and well-being. Federal programs should focus on improving energy efficiency in affordable housing and fostering partnerships with community organizations to implement these solutions effectively across the country.