

**WISCONSIN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
POLICY RESOLUTION**

Statement of WPHA Position: *Climate change is a public health issue requiring planning, policies and actions to reduce harmful health and ecological impacts.*

WHEREAS, our state, country and world are experiencing climate change that is impacting health, and

WHEREAS, “[h]uman health is affected by climate change through many pathways, [including] heat-related morbidity and mortality; flooding and storms with associated trauma and mental health concerns; air pollution, especially from ground level ozone and potentially from aeroallergens (e.g. pollens and molds); and infectious diseases, particularly those that are water- or vector-borne” (3); and

WHEREAS, “[p]opulations 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” (1); and

WHEREAS, “[t]he 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” (1); and

WHEREAS, “[s]cientists project that the decades ahead will bring changes in climate much more profound than those already observed; and in some cases those changes could occur more rapidly than plant or animal species can adapt”(2); and

WHEREAS, state and local governments have a statutory responsibility to protect the health and well being of its population, and

WHEREAS, “[o]ne of the principal challenges that the public health community faces [is] to communicate the health impacts of climate change and enhance public readiness to take actions that limit further warming” (4); and

WHEREAS, “[t] prevention approach—a model that public health practitioners are uniquely qualified to implement—is key to ensuring that climate change has a limited effect on the public’s health and safety and makes certain that preparedness will remain central in assuring community resiliency in the face of climate change” (5);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin Public Health Association

1. Calls on policy makers and state leaders to take a comprehensive approach to addressing the health and ecological impacts of climate change, including the use of mitigation and adaptation strategies at the local and state levels; and

2. Supports leadership by the Department of Health Services, Department of Natural Resources, the University of Wisconsin System schools and other partners to study, analyze, provide data and recommendations, training, expert consultation and funding in support of efforts to address the adverse effects of climate change on our state and local communities; and
3. Encourages its members and partners to establish plans and programs that engage their communities in using public health prevention strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate changes; and
4. Commits to helping its members access climate change resources available from trusted sources, including the agencies named above, as well as the American Public Health Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

References:

1. American Public Health Association (August 2014). Fact Sheet, *Get the Facts: Climate Change is a Public Health Issue*. Viewed at: https://www.apha.org/~media/files/pdf/fact%20sheets/aphaclimchg_phissue_4d.ashx
2. American Public Health Association (April 2011). *Climate Change: Mastering the Public Health Role, A Practical Guidebook*.
3. Katt-Reinders, E. and Pomplun, S, lead authors. *Wisconsin's Changing Climate: Impacts and Adaptation*. Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (2011). Viewed at <http://www.wicci.wisc.edu/report/Human-Health.pdf>
4. Patz, J, Chair. *Human Health Working Group Report*. Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (February 2011). viewed at: http://www.wicci.wisc.edu/report/2011_WICCI-Report.pdf

Footnotes:

- (1) Patz, J, Chair. Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (2011). *Human Health Working Group Report*, Executive Summary, <http://www.wicci.wisc.edu/report/Human-Health.pdf>
- (2) American Public Health Association (August 2014). Fact Sheet: *Get the Facts: Climate Change is a Public Health Issue*, August 2014, pg 1 viewed at: https://www.apha.org/~media/files/pdf/fact%20sheets/aphaclimchg_phissue_4d.ashx
- (3) Katt-Reinders, E. and Pomplun, S, lead-authors, Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (2011), pg. 6. Viewed at http://www.wicci.wisc.edu/report/2011_WICCI-Report.pdf

(4) American Public Health Association (April 2011). *Climate Change: Mastering the Public Health Role, A Practical Guidebook*, pg. 4.

(5) American Public Health Association (April 2011). *Climate Change: Mastering the Public Health Role, A Practical Guidebook*, pg. 66.

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