

**MINNESOTA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
POLICY RESOLUTION**

IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON HEALTH 2015

Statement of MPHA Position: *Climate change is a public health problem that requires planning, policies, and actions to reduce harmful health and ecological impacts.*

WHEREAS, our state, country, and world are experiencing climate change that impacts health; and

WHEREAS, climate hazards have affected Minnesota counties to varying degrees, including disaster declarations for flooding and drought¹, and all counties have vulnerable populations, which may change and grow over time; and

WHEREAS, populations that are already particularly vulnerable such as communities of color, the elderly, young children, and low-income populations, will bear the burden of negative health impacts of climate change^{2,3}; and

WHEREAS, atmospheric influences such as increases in greenhouse gas emissions, ambient temperatures, precipitation, and humidity cause disruptions in human environment that threaten the health and vitality of human communities⁴; and

WHEREAS, state experts in climatology have identified several climate trends that affect Minnesota in particular, such as rising annual temperatures and more extreme precipitation patterns with more heavy rainfall from storm activity⁴; and

WHEREAS, extreme precipitation patterns pose an economic threat to Minnesota's agricultural sector and other industries that could impact food security; and

WHEREAS, there is evidence that warmer weather leads to increased incidence of heat-related illnesses such as heat stroke, heat exhaustion, or even death, and greater incidence of vector-borne diseases such as Lyme Disease⁵; and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Department of Health has been granted Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) program funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention intended to help select states prepare for and adapt to climate and extreme weather events in order to lessen or prevent adverse health outcomes^{4,6}; and

WHEREAS, the prevention approach of public health is crucial to ensuring that climate change has a limited impact on public health and safety and ascertains that preparedness will remain a central focus in efforts working toward community resiliency in the face of climate change⁷.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Minnesota Public Health Association

1. Calls on policy makers and state leaders to comprehensively approach the ecological impacts of climate change on health, including the use of mitigation and adaptation strategies at the local and state levels; and
2. Supports leadership by the Minnesota Department of Health, the University of Minnesota system schools, and other entities to study, analyze, provide data, and recommendations, training, technical assistance, and funding in support of efforts to address the negative impacts of climate change on state and local communities; and
3. Encourages its partners and members to establish and strengthen plans and programs that involve their communities in using public health prevention strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate changes; and
4. Pledges to help its members and other stakeholders readily access resources regarding climate change from credible sources, including the American Public Health Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as organizations named above.

References:

¹ Raab, K. K. May 2015. Health implications of a changing climate. *Minnesota Medicine*.

² American Public Health Association. August 2014. Fact Sheet, *Get the Facts: Climate Change is a Public Health Issue*. Accessed at http://www.apha.org/~media/files/pdf/topics/environment/apha_climate_chg_phissue_4d.ashx.

³ Miller, J., Hoverter, S. P., & Vinci, L.F. August 2015. B4: Public Health Opportunities to Address the Health Effects of Climate Change.

⁴ Minnesota Department of Health. February 2015. *Minnesota Climate and Health Profile Report 2015: An Assessment of Climate Change Impacts on the Health and Well-being of Minnesotans*. Accessed at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/climatechange/docs/mnprofile2015.pdf>.

⁵ Luber, G., & McGeehin, M. (2008). Climate change and extreme heat events. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 35(5), 429-435.

⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015). CDC's Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) Framework. Accessed at <http://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/brace.htm>.

⁷ American Public Health Association. April 2011. *Climate Change: Mastering the Public Health Role, A Practical Guidebook*. Accessed at https://www.apha.org/~media/files/pdf/factsheets/climate_change_guidebook.ashx.