

SOLVING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

The Congressional Action Plan for a Clean Energy Economy and a Healthy, Resilient, and Just America



Strengthening Public Health Capabilities and Infrastructure for Climate Resilience

The climate crisis is a public health threat multiplier. Climate change is intensifying heat waves, degrading air quality, increasing the risk of infectious disease, and exposing people to more intense disasters that harm physical, mental, and social health. Frontline communities disproportionately exposed to climate-related health impacts face compounding challenges of insufficient access to health care, safe and sanitary housing, and nutrition. At the same time, public health systems, supply chains, and health care infrastructure are increasingly strained, reducing their capacity to respond to disasters and public health crises, as demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic.



IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH AND MANAGE CLIMATE RISKS TO HEALTH

Bolstering our nation's health systems for the climate crisis will require national planning and global leadership, along with investments in community preparedness and the resilience of hospitals and health infrastructure. The federal government must expand resources for public health departments, health facilities, and households to increase physical, social, and mental health resilience.

CONGRESS SHOULD:

Strengthen national planning to address climate risks to public health and support climate planning by state, local, territorial, and tribal health departments.

Improve data collection on climate-related health impacts including disproportionate impacts on frontline communities, and enhance programs to reduce these health burdens.

Ensure resilient public health supply chains by increasing supply chain planning and by strengthening national shipping and distribution networks.

Enhance U.S. global leadership on climate and health by strengthening U.S. participation in the World Health Organization and the Global Health Security Agenda.

Support community preparedness for the health impacts of disasters by increasing funding for federal health preparedness programs and by helping medically vulnerable populations.

Increase the planning and preparedness of hospitals and health infrastructure by requiring use of climate-informed building codes and standards and by supporting resilience planning and construction.

Strengthen the resilience of veterans health systems, including hospitals, housing, and supply chains.

Address the mental health implications of climate change by expanding access to mental health services for acute needs after disasters, for students and youth worried about the climate crisis, and for communities facing chronic pollution and climate impacts.