

Approved June 2018

Impact of Climate Change on Public Health and Implications for Emergency Medicine

Originally approved
June 2018

Climate change has significant impact on human health, health care systems, and public health infrastructure.^{1,2,3} Human health is impacted by the increased frequency and severity of diseases exacerbated by changes in the environment and extreme weather events, in addition to the introduction of unprecedented pathology and worsening of existing chronic disease. Many of these associated health impacts have a direct result in the provision of emergency medical care and, therefore, are directly relevant to the practice of emergency medicine.

As such, the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) supports collaborating with public health agencies and other stakeholders to:

- Raise awareness of the short- and long-term implications of climate change in population health and its effect in the practice of emergency medicine.
- Engage in research examining the effects of climate change on human health, health care systems, and public health infrastructure.
- Advocate for policies and practices to mitigate and address the effects of climate change on human health, health care systems, and public health infrastructure.
- Expand and improve upon regional surveillance systems of emerging diseases related to extreme weather events linked to climate change.
- Advocate for initiatives to reduce the carbon footprint of emergency departments and their affiliated institutions through energy conservation and health care waste reduction and/or recycling.
- Educate patients on appropriate precautions in extreme weather, avoidance of exacerbation triggers, early identification of exacerbations, and temporizing measures when needed.

References

1. Pachauri RK, Meyer LA (Eds.). Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): Geneva, Switzerland. 2014. Accessed on

- April 25, 2018 at http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5_SYR_FINAL_All_Topics.pdf
2. Balbus J, Crimmins A, Gamble JL. Ch. 1: Introduction: Climate Change and Human Health. In: *The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment*. U.S. Global Change Research Program: Washington, DC; 2016.
 3. Sheikhbardsiri H, Raeisi AR, Nekoei-Moghadam M, et al. Surge capacity of hospitals in emergencies and disasters with a preparedness approach: a systematic review. *Disaster Med Public Health Prep*. 2017;11(5):612-20.