

PLEASE NOTE: THIS RESOLUTION WILL BE DEBATED AT THE 2020 COUNCIL MEETING. RESOLUTIONS ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL AND THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (AS APPLICABLE).



RESOLUTION: 21(20)

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SUBJECT: Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health

PURPOSE: Requests that ACEP become a member of the Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health and pay registration and travel expenses for one ACEP member to attend the annual meeting starting in 2021.

FISCAL IMPACT: Approximately \$1,000 for travel costs to attend the annual meeting and unknown cost for the registration fee. Potential membership fee to join as a member society.

1 WHEREAS, According to the World Health Organization, climate change is “the greatest threat to global
2 health in the 21st century”²; and
3

4 WHEREAS, In the United States, adverse public health impacts resulting from climate change include, but
5 are not limited to: 1) the increasing exposure of an aging population to increasingly severe and frequent heatwaves; 2)
6 decreasing worker productivity due to extreme heat; and 3) substantial premature mortality attributable to fine
7 particulate air pollution³; and
8

9 WHEREAS, According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, climate-related risks to human
10 health are projected to increase, and we are currently not meeting national and global emission targets to adequately
11 mitigate the harmful health effects of climate change⁴; and
12

13 WHEREAS, Given the role of emergency medicine in pre-hospital and acute care, emergency departments
14 will bear a large burden of the adverse influences of climate change, particularly due to the increasing frequency and
15 severity of climate hazards (extreme heat, extreme weather events, and ecological changes) and the increasing
16 incidence and prevalence of climate-sensitive diseases (acute heat illness, respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease,
17 waterborne communicable diseases, vector-borne diseases, trauma)⁵; and
18

19 WHEREAS, Given the de facto role of emergency medicine as a “safety-net” specialty, emergency physicians
20 care for the communities and populations most vulnerable to climate change including the elderly, individuals of low
21 socioeconomic status, and patients with multiple comorbidities⁵; and
22

23 WHEREAS, ACEP has previously committed to advocating “for policies and practices to mitigate and
24 address the effects of climate change on human health, health care systems, and public health infrastructure”⁶; and
25

26 WHEREAS, ACEP has previously committed to advocating “for initiatives to reduce the carbon footprint of
27 emergency departments and their affiliated institutions through energy conservation and health care waste reduction
28 and/or recycling”⁶; and
29

30 WHEREAS, ACEP could make a powerful contribution to national climate change adaptation and mitigation
31 efforts by joining the Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health – a network of medical societies
32 encompassing over 600,000 clinicians that has, since its founding, logged 1,091 environmental health-related

33 activities across 39 states and these have included 338 policy activities, 38 research publications, 293 media articles
34 and interviews, and 422 presentations¹; and

35

36 WHEREAS, Twenty-nine other medical societies have already joined the Medical Society Consortium on
37 Climate & Health, including the California Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians, the American
38 Medical Association, the American Academy of Dermatology, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the
39 American Academy of Ophthalmology, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians
40 and Gynecologists, the American Psychiatric Association, the Infectious Diseases Society of America, and the Society
41 of General Internal Medicine⁷; and

42

43 WHEREAS, The requirement for membership is: “The Consortium will be governed by a Steering
44 Committee composed of one representative from each participating medical society, and one representative of George
45 Mason University’s Program on Climate & Health. Each participating Medical Society will designate a member of
46 their Society to serve on the Steering Committee for a term of two years (renewable), and a second member to act as
47 an alternate, when necessary. The Steering Committee will convene quarterly via conference call and have one in
48 person meeting at the Consortium annual meeting. The annual meeting will be held each spring in Washington, DC.”
49 (*Roles and Responsibilities, Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health.*); and

50

51 WHEREAS, This furthers ACEP’s mission to “be a leading advocate for emergency physicians, their
52 patients, and the public” amplifying our voices on a multidisciplinary national level; therefore be it

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54 RESOLVED, That ACEP become an official member of the Medical Society Consortium on Climate &
55 Health; and be it further

56

57 RESOLVED, That ACEP support one ACEP member representative by paying registration and travel
58 expenses to attend the Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health annual meeting starting in 2021.

References:

1. About The Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health (MSCCH). The Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health (MSCCH). <https://medsocietiesforclimatehealth.org/about/>. Accessed July 11, 2020.
2. WHO | WHO calls for urgent action to protect health from climate change – Sign the call. April 2016. <https://www.who.int/globalchange/global-campaign/cop21/en/>. Accessed July 11, 2020.
3. Salas RN, Knappenberger P, Hess JJ. Lancet Countdown, 2019: 2019 Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change Policy Brief for the United States of America. In: *Lancet Countdown U.S. Policy Brief*. London, United Kingdom.
4. IPCC. Summary for Policymakers of IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C approved by governments — IPCC. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. <https://www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments/>. Accessed July 19, 2019.
5. Sorensen CJ, Salas RN, Rublee C, et al. Clinical Implications of Climate Change on US Emergency Medicine: Challenges and Opportunities. *Ann Emerg Med*. June 2020. doi:10.1016/j.annemergmed.2020.03.010
6. Impact of Climate Change on Public Health and Implications for Emergency Medicine. American College of Emergency Physicians. <https://www.acep.org/patient-care/policy-statements/impact-of-climate-change-on-public-health-and-implications-for-emergency-medicine/>. Accessed July 11, 2020.
7. Member Societies · The Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health (MSCCH). The Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health (MSCCH). <https://medsocietiesforclimatehealth.org/about/member-societies/>. Accessed July 11, 2020.

Background

This resolution requests that ACEP become a member of the Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health and pay registration and travel expenses for one ACEP member to attend the annual meeting starting in 2021.

Climate change can be a controversial topic. However, both domestic and global organizations are addressing the effect of climate change on public health, disaster response, disease prevalence, and clinical implications. This involves research and response to the direct and indirect medical impact related to climate change.

ACEP and several other prominent medical organizations, including, but not limited to, the American Medical Association, the American College of Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Lung Association, and the American Public Health Association, the World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine, and the World Health Organization have policy statements regarding the impacts of climate change on human health

The [Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health](#) was launched in 2016 and membership currently includes 29 national medical societies and 55 partner organizations. Their mission “is to organize, empower and amplify the voice of America’s doctors to convey how climate change is harming our health and how climate solutions will improve it.” According to their Website:

“To facilitate the medical community’s awareness-raising efforts, the Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health (Consortium) brings together associations representing over 600,000 clinical practitioners to carry three simple messages:

- Climate change is harming Americans today and these harms will increase unless we act;
- The way to slow or stop these harms is to decrease the use of fossil fuels and increase energy efficiency and use of clean energy sources; and
- These changes in energy choices will improve the quality of our air and water and bring immediate health benefits.

This is especially important to vulnerable Americans and communities who are experiencing a disproportionate impact today from climate change.”

ACEP has liaison relationships with many medical organizations but none that are associated with climate change.

ACEP Strategic Plan Reference

None

Fiscal Impact

Approximately \$1,000 for travel costs to attend the annual meeting and unknown cost for the registration fee. Potential membership fee to join as a member society.

Prior Council Action

None that are specific to joining the Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health.

Resolution 46(17) Impact of Climate Change on Patient Health and Implications for Emergency Medicine referred to the Board of Directors.

Prior Board Action

The Board approves all formal liaison relationships with other organizations but has not previously considered a liaison with the Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health.

June 2018, adopted the policy statement “[Impact of Climate Change on Public Health and Implications for Emergency Medicine.](#)”

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