Climate Change and Public Health in Connecticut: State Health Assessment 2019 and the Governor’s Council on Climate Change

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2011 Connecticut Climate Change Preparedness Plan

- Governor’s Steering Committee on Climate Change
- Contains a set of Public Health Adaption Recommendations
Foundational Work

Public Health Workgroup Recommendations to the Connecticut Climate Change Preparedness Plan

In 2011, DPH coordinated with four other state agencies as part of the Governor’s Steering Committee on Climate Change to develop a preparedness plan for the state culminating in eighteen recommendations specific to three action areas for public health:

- **Best Management Practices:**
  1. Consider the needs of vulnerable populations in climate change adaptation planning.
  2. Evaluate ozone non-attainment alert systems.
  3. Evaluate current early extreme weather events warning system and emergency response plans.
  4. Continue to develop and update all municipal emergency preparedness plans for extreme weather events.
  5. Develop cooling station best management practices.
  6. Develop criteria for school closings and outdoor play during extreme heat events.

- **Research, Monitoring and Education:**
  1. Educate other sectors of state government about public health climate change impacts and adaptation.
  2. Educate local health department staff on climate change impacts.
  3. Develop educational materials concerning poor air quality.
  4. Continue to monitor health ailments caused by ozone non-attainment.
  5. Assist local health departments with climate change adaptation.
  6. Incorporate climate change preparedness strategies into public health education.
  7. Develop a database of morbidity and mortality caused by climate change.
  8. Intensify vector associated disease monitoring.
  9. Increase airborne pollen monitoring.

- **Policy, Regulation, and Funding:**
  1. Develop legislation to allow regulatory agencies to respond to extreme heat conditions in occupational settings.
  2. Continue to support funding to provide for adequate updates to municipal sewage infrastructure.
  3. Support funding to provide for adequate updates to municipal water infrastructure.
State Agencies Fostering Resilience (SAFR) Council

State Agencies Fostering Resilience (SAFR) is tasked with creating a resilience roadmap for the state and includes representatives from nine state agencies.

Governor Malloy established SAFR Council through Executive Order 50

Governor Lamont signed Executive Order No. 3 that includes climate change mitigation and adaptation provisions and continues SAFR as a subcommittee to the Governor's Council on Climate Change.
Climate Change and Connecticut Drinking Water
Connecticut State Health Assessment 2019
What is a State Health Assessment?

- A collaborative process of collecting and analyzing data and information for use in:
  - Educating and mobilizing communities
  - Developing priorities
  - Garnering resources or using resources in different ways
  - Adopting or revising policies
  - Planning actions to improve health
State Health Assessment Process

Proposed Timeline for Developing the SHA 2.0

- 2018
  - Workplan, initial key informant interviews
  - Data Advisory Committee recommends health indicators

- 2019
  - Health indicators finalized, SHA template developed
  - Community listening sessions, qualitative data collection
  - Data gathered for the SHA, including assets/resource mapping
  - SHA report internal draft, reviewed by stakeholders

- 2020
  - SHA report revised and published
  - SHA report revised and published
  - SHA report revised and published
  - SHA report revised and published
  - SHA report revised and published
  - Climate and Health Identified for Inclusion
  - SHA report revised, published on website for public comment
  - SHA report revised and published

SHIP 2.0
Since 2010, CDC has funded 18 state and local health departments to address local impacts of climate change on health.
Climate and Health

CHAPTER 8:
Climate & Health

INTRODUCTION

The climate of Connecticut is changing and these changes pose risks to the health of our populations. Rates of Emergency Department (ED) utilisation for heat-related illness are associated with annual rates of extreme heat days and differences in ED visit rates for heat-related illness are evident between race/ethnicity groups in our state. Another outcome associated with increasing temperatures globally is rates of infection with the pathogen *Vibrio*, and these rates have been on the rise in our state since the mid-1990s.

National assessments recognize populations most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change to include those with low incomes, some communities of color, as well as numerous other distinct vulnerable populations. Federal standards identify vulnerable populations as a necessary first step for state health departments to address the health impacts of climate change. Currently, some state health departments that undertake such assessments have dedicated programming to support them to address the health impacts of climate change in their populations.

Although DPH did a preliminary assessment of the health impacts of climate change in Connecticut at the beginning of this decade, our agency has not yet conducted a more detailed assessment to identify populations most vulnerable to climate change, nor does DPH have a dedicated program focused on climate and health. Collaboration with other state agencies, local health directors, Connecticut universities, and non-governmental organizations will be important for addressing the impacts of climate change in Connecticut.

Governor’s Council on Climate Change Public Health and Safety Work Group
Signed on September 3, 2019

Expands the responsibilities of the Governor's Council on Climate Change, increases its membership, and directs the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to evaluate pathways to transition to a 100 percent clean energy grid by 2040.
Executive Order 3 Objectives

Develop and implement adaptation strategies to assess and prepare for the impacts of climate change in areas such as infrastructure, agriculture, natural resources, and public health. This includes tasks such as:

- developing framework for conducting an inventory of vulnerable assets and operations;
- revising and updating the statewide Adaptation and Resilience Plan; and
- reporting on the alignment of climate change adaptation strategies incorporated into state agency planning processes and documents.
GC3 Structure

Governor’s Council on Climate Change

Climate Change Mitigation Subcommittee
- Progress on Mitigation Strategies

Climate Change Adaptation and Resiliency Subcommittee
- Equity and Environmental Justice
- Working and Natural Lands
- Science and Technology
- Financing Adaptation & Resilience
- Infrastructure and Land Use Adaptation
- Public Health and Safety
- Assessing Vulnerabilities in State Assets & Operations

Working Groups
Overall Timeline

- **Dec 2019**: GC3 Kick Off Meeting
- **Jan 2020**: Subcommittees Meet (Define & set subcommittee & working groups tasks and schedule for the year)
- **Feb – Aug 2020**: Working Groups meet, conduct outreach and draft recommendations
- **Fall 2020**: Release draft recommendations for public comment
- **Dec 2020**: Finalize recommendations and reports

- **January 15, 2021**: Final Reports to Governor Lamont
Two Phase GC3 Process

- GC3 reporting process will continue through the end of 2021
- *Phase 1* interim reports provided to the Governor with initial recommendations by **January 15, 2021**
- *Phase 2* final report and recommendations provided by **December 31, 2021**
The Public Health and Safety Work Group represents over 40 public health professionals, academic researchers, climate resilience planners, health equity and environmental justice representatives, and environmental consultants. It is co-lead by Lori Mathieu, DPH Branch Chief and Laura Hayes, DPH Epidemiologist, on behalf of DPH Deputy Commissioner Heather Aaron.

Our scope is the suite of planning and implementation actions needed to address present-day and foreseeable threats to the protection and improvement of the health and safety of all people of Connecticut associated with climate change, with a focus on health equity.

Key components are assessments to identify vulnerable populations, projections of future disease burden, assessments of suitable intervention for health impacts of greatest concern, coordination to facilitate implementation of recommended actions, and review of intervention effectiveness.

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<tr>
<th>Health Impact Domains</th>
<th>Water-borne Illnesses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Temp-related Illness and Death</td>
<td>Nutrition and Food Safety</td>
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<td>Extreme Events</td>
<td>Mental Health</td>
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<td>Air Quality Impacts</td>
<td>Vector-borne Diseases</td>
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• The Public Health and Safety Work Group developed a draft report for the GC3 in early August of 2020.

• The report is organized around 3 sections:
  • Statement of Scope
  • Review and Synthesis and 2011 Preparedness Report Recommendations
  • Statements of Health Impacts for 7 specific Domains, Statements of Vulnerable Populations, and 31 Recommendations for Adaptation and Resilience Actions to Address the Needs of Vulnerable Populations

• The final version of the report for public comment will be available on September 22, 2020.