



Joint Position Statement

October 9th, 2018

Introduction:

As trusted health professionals, nurses are urgently needed to act and advocate for climate solutions. Nurses are in every community; hospitals, clinics, schools, workplaces, academic institutions, and neighborhoods. As a profession, nurses are obligated to address environmental concerns affecting health¹, including climate change.

Climate change is causing extended heat spells; both flooding and droughts across the country; extreme weather events; larger and hotter forest fires, increased transmission risk of vector-borne disease, and threats to food and water supply.^{2,3,4} ⁵ The health impacts of climate change demand bold and immediate action. By addressing climate change now, we have the opportunity to significantly improve public health.

Nursing Collaborative on Climate Change and Health:

The Nursing Collaborative on Climate and Health (NCCCH), launched in partnership with the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments and ecoAmerica's Climate for Health Program, was formed as an avenue to elevate nursing leadership in addressing and responding to climate change. In recognition of climate change as a global threat to health⁶, the NCCCH acknowledges, as a profession focused on preventing disease and advocating on behalf of patients, that nurses play a significant role in addressing climate change as it relates to health.

Our organizations acknowledge the need to prioritize action as an important issue for the profession and as a solution to reduce climate change associated health impacts. Collectively, through engaging our memberships, the NCCCH supports efforts for nurses to invest in the necessary knowledge and skills to address the health needs of the American public, to engage in mitigation activities in personal and professional lives, to participate in climate change-related disaster response,

and to support and engage in policy discussions to insure equitable care for all Americans in the face of climate impacts.

Commitment into Action:

The NCCCH recognizes the need for unification and coordination among the nursing profession in addressing this issue. The NCCCH and affiliate organizations commit to the following actions to elevate nursing's response to climate change:

- To work within our nursing organizations and collaboratively with each other to help prioritize climate change and its impacts as a nursing issue.
- To increase education of the nursing profession on the health impacts of climate change through inclusion of topic in continuing education, nursing curriculum, organizational meetings and annual conferences, and other educational offerings.
- To provide appropriate education to our patients and their families and the communities we serve about climate change, the associated health effects, and ways to minimize exposures to prevent adverse health effects.
- To support sustainability action in practice environments and to work in our communities and health facilities to best prepare for climate-change related health threats and emergencies.
- To raise our voices within our communities and through our nursing organizations in policy arenas at the local, state, and national level to advocate for policies that will mitigate the current trajectory of global warming and address equitable distribution of resources for disproportionately affected populations.

The benefits of these commitments will be a more knowledgeable and capable nursing workforce that is united in moving climate solutions forward to improve public health. This unity and cooperation will serve us well in caring for the health of all Americans.

We the undersigned join this commitment:

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

American Association of Occupational Health Nurses

American College of Nurse-Midwives

Association of Community Health Nursing Educators

Association of Public Health Nurses
National Alaska Native American Indian Nurses Association
Nurse Alliance of SEIU Healthcare
National Association of Hispanic Nurses
National Black Nurses Association
National Student Nurses' Association
Public Health Nursing Section of the American Public Health
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association

¹ American Nurses Association. (2015). *Nursing: Scope and standards of practice* (3rd Ed.). Silver Spring, MD: American Nurses Association.

²Anderko, L., Schenk, E., Huffling, K., & Chapluka, S. (2017). *Climate change, health, and nursing: A call to action*. Retrieved from <https://envirn.org/climate-change-health-and-nursing/>.

³ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2014). *Climate change 2014: Synthesis report. Contribution of working group I, II, and III to the fifth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Pachauri, R.K. & Meyer, L.A. (Eds.)]. Geneva, Switzerland: IPCC.

Watts, N., Amann, M., Ayeb-Karlsson, S., Belesova, K., Bouley, T., Boykoff, M., ... Byass, P. (2018). The Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: From 25 years of inaction to a global transformation for public health. *The Lancet*, *391*, 581-560.

⁴USGCRP. (2017). *Climate science special report: Fourth national climate assessment, Volume I* [Wuebbles, D.J., Fahey, D.W., Hibbard, K.A., Dokken, D.J., Stewart, B.C., & Maycock, T.K.(eds.)]. Washington, DC: U.S. Global Change Research Program. doi: 10.7930/J0J964J6.

⁵ Watts, N., Amann, M., Ayeb-Karlsson, S., Belesova, K., Bouley, T., Boykoff, M., ... Byass, P. (2018). The Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: From 25 years of inaction to a global transformation for public health. *The Lancet*, *391*, 581-560.

⁶ World Health Organization. *WHO calls for urgent action to protect health from climate change*. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/globalchange/global-campaign/cop21/en/>