



American Academy of Pediatrics
Orange County Chapter
INCORPORATED IN CALIFORNIA

Climate Health Committee Charter

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Climate Health Committee is:

- to develop educational materials for AAP OC members on the impact of climate change and environmental pollutants on child health
- advocate for climate change mitigation strategies within healthcare settings
- collaborate with community-based agencies to advance climate and environmental justice
- advocate for policies at the municipal, state, and federal level focused on climate initiatives and environmental health.

Our work will relate to climate and environmental health activities relevant to the needs of the state and remain consistent with national AAP positions/agendas.

The Climate Health Committee, a standing committee reporting to the Chapter's Board of Directors, is established pursuant to fulfilling the mission of the Chapter. The Executive Director shall serve as staff to the Committee.

The Committee shall meet as necessary and appropriate at the call of the Co-Chairs (or Chairman or Vice-Chair of the Committee) or the Executive Director, and shall maintain minutes of all meetings, which will be distributed to the Board, preferably in advance of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Background

Climate change is a global public health problem that requires immediate and large-scale action in order to prevent drastic worldwide health impacts. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, human activities have caused approximately 1.0 degrees C of global warming above pre-industrial levels, and if anthropogenic emissions continue to increase at their current rate, global warming is likely to reach 1.5 degrees C between 2030 and 2052. We are already witnessing the health consequences of this warming: heat-related illness and death from extreme heat events; vector-borne diseases such as Lyme Disease and West Nile Virus; food insecurity and displacement from extreme weather events, wildfires, droughts, flooding and rising sea levels; worsening allergies and asthma from high pollen and air pollution; and even prematurity and low birthweight. According to the World Health Organization, more than 88% of the existing burden of disease attributable to climate change occurs in children younger than five years. Children are uniquely vulnerable to these effects due to their physiology and increased risk of environmental exposures.

The Fourth California Climate Assessment outlines how the health of California communities are uniquely vulnerable to climate change:

- **Coastal changes:** California sea level is projected to rise 55 inches by 2100, which would put two-thirds of California beaches underwater and decimate millions of homes, schools and businesses. Harmful algal blooms continue to spread toxic chemicals that cause vomiting, diarrhea, rashes, and seizures.
- **Wildfires:** Forest and vegetation constitute 80% of California land. The combination of rising temperatures, worsening drought, and Santa Ana winds leads to wildfire seasons that are increasingly intense and last longer. Harmful effects of wildfire smoke extend hundreds of miles past the areas devastated by the fires, resulting in higher rates of asthma exacerbations, allergy flares, and sinus infections.
- **Extreme Heat:** Orange County in particular has low amounts of tree canopy and a high proportion of urban and suburban heat islands. Several low income households do not have access to appropriate cooling systems. Vulnerable communities have higher rates of heat illness, heat stroke, and sudden death.
- **Flooding:** While climate change leads to worsening drought, California has also increasingly seen the opposing extreme of atmospheric rivers. Over time, these precipitation extremes are likely to increase risk of severe floods.

Committee Membership

Open to interested members and allied health professionals, no limit in size of committee or duration of membership. Founding Co-Chairs are listed in the roster section below. Every two years, committee members may apply for the Co-Chair positions. In the absence of new applicants, incumbent Co-Chairs may renew their leadership for subsequent two-year terms; there is no limit on the total duration of service in this role. All Co-Chair appointments are made biennially by the President and remain subject to affirmation by the Board of Directors.

Committee Charter (committee duties/responsibilities):

Acting with the Executive Director and Chapter President, the Climate Health Committee is charged to:

- Establish, and present to the board for approval, a climate and environmental health agenda, updated on a yearly basis.
- Facilitate relevant educational opportunities (e.g., webinar series and updates, book/movie discussions, CATCH grant applications, national conferences, leadership training, advocacy training for chapter members, etc.).
- Work with Chapter leadership, members, committees along with communities and community organizations (both within and outside the healthcare arena) to advocate for local and national policies that impact children and advance climate and environmental health.
- Collaborate with community-based agencies, particularly those working on climate justice.
- Organize at least one regional (or statewide) focused advocacy activity per year.
- Create advocacy toolkits for chapter members.

Proposed Committee Timeline

Year One

- Host at least 4 (quarterly) committee member meetings by the end of Year 1.
- Ensure all meetings are advertised in the monthly chapter newsletter, with agendas and minutes shared with committee members and the Board of Directors within one week of each meeting.
- Organize one virtual CME webinar related to climate and environmental health by the end of Year One.
- Establish formal contact and initiate collaboration with local climate health-related organizations including but not limited to the UC Center for Climate Health and Equity, Climate Health Now, Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSU), and Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) by the end of Year One.

Year Two

- Review and update committee goals and compile a summary of committee's accomplishments during Year One to present to the Board of Directors during the first quarter of Year Two.
- Host at least 6 committee meetings, advertising them monthly in the newsletter, distributing documentation as above throughout Year Two.
- Organize and execute two virtual CME webinars related to climate and environmental health by the end of Year Two.
- Maintain contact with local climate health-related organizations including but not limited to the UC Center for Climate Health and Equity, Climate Health Now, and Physicians for Social Responsibility throughout Year Two.
- Initiate the process of converting Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSU) educational handouts into smartphrases for pediatricians to use in their electronic medical record for purposes of patient education. Complete the drafting phase for a baseline set of climate health topics by the end of Year Two.
- Select one specific climate health-related legislative topic or bill by the end of June, and have at least 50% of active committee members initiate contact with their local or state representatives to discuss the policy's impact on children's health by the end of November.

Year Three

- Review and update committee goals and compile a summary of committee's accomplishments during Year Two to present to the Board of Directors during the first quarter of Year Three.
- Host at least 8 committee meetings, advertising them monthly in the newsletter, distributing documentation as above, and maintaining active contact with established local climate health partners throughout Year Three.
- Increase educational output by organizing and executing quarterly virtual CME webinars (4 total) focused on climate and environmental health during Year Three.
- Maintain contact with local climate health-related organizations including but not limited to the UC Center for Climate Health and Equity, Climate Health Now, and Physicians for Social Responsibility throughout Year Three.
- Complete process of transforming PEHSU handouts into smartphrases for pediatricians to use in their electronic medical record for purposes of patient education regarding different climate

health topics. Disseminate these smartphrases to AAP OC chapter membership via email and via a downloadable toolkit on AAP OC website by the end of Year Three.

- Select one specific climate health-related legislative topic or bill by the end of June, and have at least 75% of active committee members initiate contact with their local or state representatives to discuss the policy's impact on children's health by the end of November.

Committee Roster

Stephanie Lee (Co-Chair)

Pritha Multani (Co-Chair)

Elizabeth Sturdy (Executive Director)

Subject to modification prior to approval by Board of Directors