

UCSF Climate Health Newsletter

Advancing Science, Building Bridges, Creating Community

September 2020

Severe smoke, heat and wildfires: our new norm?

See the medical student-initiated symposium from Dec. 2018: "[Severe Wildfires: A Climate Health Emergency.](#)"

Welcome to the Summer edition of the UCSF Climate Health Newsletter, which highlights the activities of two members of our UCSF's climate health community, comments on the relationship between global warming and current events, and provides helpful links for upcoming events and opportunities for action at UCSF and beyond.

Please feel free to [share this Newsletter](#) with others, and [let us know](#) if you have comments, questions, or contributions for upcoming editions.



Karly Hampshire, MS3

Founder & Director of Planetary Health Report Card

Photo by Karly Hampshire

How does UCSF School of Medicine compare to other schools graded on the Planetary Health Report Card? After more than a year of intense work on this project, UCSF student, Karly Hampshire, and colleagues have gone "live" with institutional results and summaries, which can be found at <https://phreportcard.org>. A key outcome of the "grading" process has been the generation of productive conversations and collaborations among students, faculty and leadership. This effort has created de facto "needs-assessments" for individual medical schools, on which each institution can establish goals and build its optimal response to the health emergency of global warming.

Questions or comments? Contact: karly.hampshire@ucsf.edu (MS3) or bennett.kissel@ucsf.edu (MS4).



Chelsea Landolin, RN, MS, NP

HS Assistant Clinical Professor
Department of Community Health Systems
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Photo by Elizabeth Fall

Chelsea has volunteered in multiple capacities to advance Climate Health efforts at UCSF. In addition to being an avid cyclist and serving the community of UCSF bicycle commuters, Chelsea serves on the Academic Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Sustainability. Currently she is the UCSF Co-chair for the upcoming UCSF-Stanford NorCal Symposium on Climate and Pandemic Resilience in Health Care. This event is organized in large part by students from both UCSF and Stanford. According to Chelsea:

"UCSF and Stanford have embarked on a novel collaboration to present the first NorCal Symposium on Climate and Pandemic Resilience in Health Care, a virtual event planned for September 25th, 2020. The symposium is for health professionals, trainees, staff, and administrators interested in learning more about the intersection of climate change, health, equity, and pandemic-readiness from a wide range of experts. Attendees will learn best practices that can simultaneously result in cost savings and carbon footprint reduction, as well as have opportunities to build professional networks in a supportive environment. The keynote speaker is internist Cheryl Holder, MD, an expert on climate change's impacts on underserved populations, who will discuss these areas in the context of COVID-19. Workshops, lightning talks, and leadership panels will center on advocacy, reducing health sector emissions and waste, community partnerships, disaster preparedness, curriculum reform, resilient food systems, and more."

[Register here](#) for the symposium. Up to 6.5 CME/CE hours are available to participants.

Interested in sponsoring or volunteering? Please contact [Chelsea Landolin](#).



Global Warming, Health Disparities, and Structural Racism

Photo by Mario Tama

Videos of rising sea waters and migrating insect vectors rarely make headline news. Manifestations of global warming often move too slowly to capture the sense of urgency required to "bend the curve" of catastrophic climate related health threats. Even the escalating acute events, such as killer heat waves in India, Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, and the enormous fires in Australia and the Amazon have not led to a collective intake of breath... and a reset of business as usual.

Enter COVID-19. By impacting every country at once and laying bare the monumental suffering of family, friends and communities, the pandemic, with its possible reflection of the future, has captured the attention of people everywhere. However, it has also provided a glimpse of what collective, aggressive action can accomplish in short order. In a nod to how quickly mother nature responds, the shelter-in-place efforts over several weeks resulted in a glorious blue sky around the Taj Majal, disappearance of nitrogen dioxide pollution on satellite images, and wild animals testing new-found quiet in urban landscapes. Collaborations among scientists internationally have resulted in major and rapid advances in our understanding of the Sars-CoV-2 virus.

COVID-19 has also revealed the stark tragedy of health disparities. Although health professionals have consistently voiced concern about the discrepancies in harm from acute and chronic climate events, COVID-19 has provided sudden exposure to the disproportionate burden of disease on people of color. Is it any wonder that on this background of tragedy, video clips revealing prejudice and violence against Black citizens have triggered international outrage and passionate, far-reaching calls for the end of systemic racism and injustice in our society?

The health impacts of global warming, the roots and manifestations of COVID-19 infection, and structural racism are interrelated. Fortunately, they also share common solutions.

Air pollution, for example, is particularly high in many communities of color, which may be located near factories or ports with high levels of fossil fuel consumption. Transitioning away from fossil fuel energy sources will decrease the associated lung disease, heart disease and all-cause mortality in these communities, while minimizing global warming by reducing greenhouse gas output. This is just one example of how solutions to global warming are also solutions to health disparities.

By recognizing that global warming contributes to the emergence of pandemics, and that both of these challenges have strong ties to health disparities, solutions can be designed to maximize positive outcomes for all of them.

Climate Health Links

NorCal Symposium on Climate and Pandemic Resilience in Health Care

Join to hear UCSF's COO Sheila Antrum speak at the Climate, Health and Pandemic leadership panel moderated by CA Surgeon General, Nadine Burke Harris. Connect with passionate colleagues and learn from experts how to practice sustainable health care that will improve resilience, mitigate climate change, and promote equity. Event is Friday, Sept. 25th, 9-5pm. [Register for free.](#)

UCSF MiniMedical School for the Public: The Health Emergency of Our Changing Climate

Registration opening soon for [Part 2: Evolving Public Health Strategies for the 21st Century](#). The course series will begin Tuesday, Oct. 20th. You can still access courses from [Part 1](#), which covered the climate health impacts on patients.

Human Health + Climate Change Student Group

All new and current students can join! [Learn more](#) about this interdisciplinary student organization at UCSF made up of medical, pharmacy, nursing and dentistry students focused on creating awareness and enacting change at the intersection of climate change and health.

California Climate Health Now

Interested in joining physicians and health professional colleagues who are advocating science to climate policy action? Check out [Climate Health Now](#), a coalition of health practitioners in the state working to address the climate crisis health emergency.

Physicians for Social Responsibility

The Bay Area Chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility has a very active environmental committee, including many UCSF members, and even a new book club. See their [new website](#) to obtain more information.

UCSF Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment

Learn more about the [Environmental Health Initiative \(EHI\)](#), a collaborative transdisciplinary network of academics across UCSF with a goal to improve health throughout the lifespan of individuals and populations. Explore the program's new, NIEHS-funded [Environmental Research and Translation for Health \(EaRTH\) Center](#), launching Monday, Sept. 14th.



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