

UCSF Climate Health Newsletter

Advancing Science, Building Bridges, Creating Community

"We have the opportunity to make a significant difference to planetary and patient health in the 21st century. The time is now, and the place is UCSF."

UCSF Community Dialogue on Climate Health, November,

2019

Welcome to the first UCSF Climate Health Newsletter.

The combination of COVID-19 and the 50th anniversary of Earth Day offers both humbling and energizing opportunities to reimagine and realign our relationships with the planet and with each other.

Prior to the pandemic, many faculty, students, and staff had been hard at work advancing Climate Health efforts at UCSF. The changing climate, with its associated threats of heat, floods, vector-borne diseases, displacement, and many others, was clearly the greatest public health threat of the 21st century. COVID-19 has served as a potent reminder, however, of the large-scale potential for pandemics to change life as we know it in a matter of days.



The two topics—climate and pandemics—are intricately related, and next month's Newsletter will consider lessons learned that might inform the rebuilding of day to day lives, as well as professional and societal responses to the imperative for a healthier planet.

In the meantime, this first Newsletter shares the highlights of a (pre-COVID-19) Climate Health Dialogue, during which 60 faculty, students, staff and community health professionals identified strengths, challenges and opportunities for growth in Climate Health advancement at UCSF. Additionally, important links are shared that will familiarize readers with a few of the many Climate Health activities and opportunities at UCSF. By instituting a platform for Climate Health communication, the Newsletter aims to augment and accelerate what UCSF does best: advance the related science, education, clinical care, and advocacy for present and future generations.

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

UCSF Climate Health Dialogue

Summary

Self-assessment of strengths, challenges and opportunities for building a robust response to the health emergency of our warming planet

The 60 faculty, students, staff and community members who attended the Dialogue met together and in breakout groups to discuss Research, Education/Clinical Care and Advocacy.

Here are **six common themes** that emerged from the event:

1. UCSF has the potential to serve as an international leader in education, research, clinical care and advocacy in Climate Health. With its strong reputation and passion to make a difference, UCSF can bend the curve of global warming and train Climate Health leaders of the future – if the community acts quickly to establish goals, coordinate efforts, and support high impact endeavors.
2. Work in silos has inhibited collaboration among many dedicated and talented community members. There have been few opportunities for dialogue and informed growth. The geography of multiple worksites contributes to this challenge. Students, in particular, expressed frustration that there is no integrated process for finding mentors, obtaining more education and developing academic projects. This points to the need for a Climate Health centralized hub to facilitate collaborations and mitigate the barriers of space, financial support, and time that discourage busy people from getting started.
3. Solutions to global warming are also well-known solutions to health disparities.
4. UCSF has strong local, national, and international partnerships that should be expanded and nourished to address Climate Health issues. Partnerships should be encouraged with multiple entities, such as public health groups, non-profit organizations, corporations, and other medical institutions.
5. The UCSF community needs enhanced pathways to translate Climate Health research into education and policy change.
6. The UCSF Fossil Fuel Library contains a treasure trove of information, which ties in well with climate-related drivers of disease and reflects one of several major opportunities for discovery and innovation that can accelerate progress toward a healthier planet.

More near-verbatim comments and contributions from the meeting can be found [here](#).

Climate Health Links

Information, Events, Opportunities for Action

Information

[Human Health and Climate Change](#) student group

[Watch UCSF medical students](#) discuss the link between climate and health

Get to know the [UCSF Office of Sustainability](#)

[Resource Library for Health Professionals](#)

[Climate and Health Resources](#)

Is your medical society a member of the [Medical Society Consortium for Climate and Health?](#)

Events

[UCSF Osher MiniMedical School for the Public: "The Health Emergency of Climate Change"](#)

Tuesday Evenings, Starting April 28th

The Spring Climate Health Event, sponsored by the Ad Hoc Academic Senate Committee on Sustainability, originally scheduled for May 15th, is cancelled. Depending on the status of COVID-19, the event may occur the first or second Friday of October. Stay tuned.

Opportunities for Action

Interested in the carbon footprint of faculty travel? Join our students Colin Baylen and Stephen Ettinger, along with faculty member Sara Ackerman, PhD, who wish to learn more about your experience and ideas beyond “carbon offsets.” How can we engage the entire UCSF community in an “all in” strategy to change the culture of faculty travel? For more information, contact colin.baylen@ucsf.edu or stephen.ettinger@ucsf.edu.

Co-founded by 4th year medical student Sarah Shear, learn how California physicians have banded together to serve as active advocates for their patients’ health through the organization [Climate Health Now](#)

[Periodic funding opportunities for trainees](#)



Medical Students Call On Us to Vote for Climate Action & Health

Medical Students for a Sustainable Future express how the climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic response will impact our future patients and colleagues.



A big thank you to the Office of Sustainability and Gail Lee for supporting the Newsletter’s production and for contributing important links.

The ad hoc Academic Senate Committee on Sustainability, Marya Zlatnik, MD, MMS, Chair

Katherine Gundling, MD (School of Medicine)

Sheri Weiser, MD, MPH, MA (School of Medicine)

Arianne Teherani, PhD (School of Medicine)

Jeremy Alberga, Deputy Director, Global Health Group, IGHS

Naomi Beyeler, Co-Director, Evidence-Policy, Global Health Sciences

The indefatigable members of The Human Health and Climate Change (HHCC) student group

...and many other colleagues



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