

**THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS  
RESOLUTION ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Resolution Summary**

Climate change could create a variety of public health threats, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Increasing global temperatures could lead to:

- Rising sea levels, flooding and more intense storms such as hurricanes that have the power to devastate communities, trigger public health emergencies, compromise mental health and, in the aftermath, potentially expose people to hazardous substances;
- The spread of vector-borne and infectious diseases, such as malaria and dengue; and
- More respiratory diseases, such as asthma, as air pollution worsens.

The CDC is developing an action plan to respond to the public health consequences of climate change. The CDC plan will contain recommendations for federal, state, and local actions. Components of the plan will include:

- Researching the full range of health threats posed by climate change;
- Increasing capacity to identify, monitor and model health risks, such as heat stress, vector-, food- and water-borne diseases, and other climate-related health effects;
- Implementing health promotion efforts to develop and enhance the preparedness of the public and of health care providers; and
- Working with state and local health departments and other partners as a credible resource on the public health effects of climate change

States learned during the 9/11 crisis and after Hurricane Katrina the necessity of having emergency preparedness systems in place. Since these events, many states have undertaken strategic planning for emergency preparedness. As long as credible scientific evidence points to the possibility of health threats as a result of climate change, protecting the public requires preparing for these threats. Furthermore, there are a number of public policy strategies that could begin to address climate change that would offer co-benefits for health and the environment.

**Additional Resource Information**

CDC National Center for Environmental Health, upcoming action plan and other information

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh>

CDC site on environmental public health issues

<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov>

U.S. Climate Change Science Program Web site information

<http://www.climatescience.gov>

CSG Healthy States Quarterly, Spring 2007

<http://www.csg.org/policy/health/default.aspx>

## **Public Health and Climate Change Management Directives**

(Health Policy Task Force)

- ⌚ **Management Directive #1:** Support state efforts to mitigate health impacts of climate change and to adopt strategies to address climate change that have co-benefits for health and the environment.
  
- ⌚ **Management Directive #2:** CSG staff will post approved resolution on CSG's Web site and make available through its regular communication venues at the state and local level to ensure its distribution to the state government and policy community.

**THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS**  
**Resolution on Public Health and Climate Change**

**WHEREAS**, there is scientific evidence showing the earth's atmospheric composition is changing, and as a result, the climate is changing;

**WHEREAS**, there may be climate change effects which could include heat waves, heavy precipitation events, air pollution, more variable weather, flooding, droughts and sea level rise;

**WHEREAS**, the effects of climate change may impact geographic regions, communities and neighborhoods differently;

**WHEREAS**, climate change may result in potential health impacts. These effects could be related to heat waves, injuries and death from catastrophic events, increased respiratory diseases from allergies and asthma, and increased risk of water-borne, food-borne and vector-borne disease;

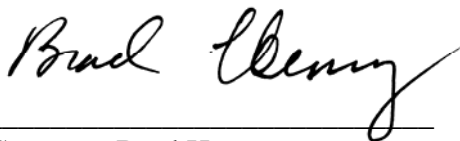
**WHEREAS**, there are vulnerable populations which may be at greater risk for health consequences from climate change including the elderly, children, people of low socioeconomic status, racial minorities, people with some pre-existing health conditions and coastal area residents;

**WHEREAS**, health risks resulting from climate change can be mitigated through public health action taken at the federal, state, and local levels, and through collaboration with partners;

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that due to the potentially serious health impacts of climate change, The Council of State Governments urges state and local policymakers to consider policies and programs that support public health actions to prepare for and address health risks related to climate change.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that The Council of State Governments urges state and local policymakers to consider and adopt policies and programs that address the public health effects of climate change on vulnerable populations.

Adopted this 14<sup>th</sup> Day of November, 2007 at the  
CSG Annual State Trends and Leadership Forum  
in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



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Governor Brad Henry  
2007 CSG President



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Representative Deborah Hudson  
2007 CSG Chair