

Climate Change:
Our Health in the Balance

National Public Health Week
April 7-13, 2008

Facts/Tools Partners/Sponsors Press Events

It's time for public health
to have a voice
in the conversation.

Press Releases

Public Health Leaders Unveil Blueprint for Tackling Climate Change

Landmark Document Represents Emerging Consensus of Top Health and Climate Experts, Includes Recommendations for Health Professionals and the Public

WASHINGTON, DC, March 31, 2008 – The American Public Health Association (APHA) today unveiled its first-ever [blueprint](#) for combating the health impacts of climate change, representing the culmination of a process involving some of the nation's leading public health and climate change experts. The blueprint will receive nationwide attention in the coming weeks as 50,000 members of APHA and its Affiliates along with its many partners celebrate National Public Health Week 2008, April 7-13, with the theme *Climate Change: Our Health in the Balance*.

"Public health professionals are uniquely positioned to lead the way in addressing the health impacts of climate change," said Georges Benjamin, MD, FACP, FACEP (E), executive director of APHA. "They can help make real progress by emphasizing preparedness, prevention, research, partnerships and policy. This blueprint for tackling climate change is a concrete step toward that goal."

"Global warming could be one of the top challenges facing the public health community today," said former U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher, MD, PhD, who is the director of the Center for Excellence on Health Disparities at Morehouse School of Medicine and director of the Satcher Health Leadership Institute. "It presents challenges nearly unprecedented in scope, scale and difficulty – especially when it comes to our most vulnerable populations, who are the most at risk. We must respond accordingly."

The blueprint, which includes recommendations for both health professionals and the public, was developed through a collaborative process that culminated in a recent summit convened by APHA that included health and climate change experts from around the country. It was unveiled as part of the Association of Health Care Journalists annual conference.

The blueprint's top recommendations for the public health community call for:

- **Education and outreach**, working to ensure that public health concerns are included in policies and programs related to climate change;
- **Research** such as vulnerability assessments for specific communities and federally funded analyses of how the health impacts vary by region and population;
- **Advocacy**, including helping decision makers understand the climate-health connection and strengthening the capacity of the public health work force to prepare and respond;

- **Support of best practices** that build on existing public health programs that can help address climate change and that promote the development of healthy communities; and
- **Healthy behaviors** such as helping the public health system go green, and walking or biking instead of driving a car, and reducing, reusing and recycling.

"The public health community has an important role to play in making the connection between the way we lead our lives, our impact on the planet and the planet's impact on our health," said Edward Maibach, PhD, professor and director of the Center of Excellence in Climate Change Communication Research at George Mason University. "This blueprint makes that connection crystal clear. It includes concrete recommendations to help health professionals face this unprecedented challenge."

Recommendations for the public are outlined as part of a [Healthy Climate Pledge](#) that individuals around the country will commit to during National Public Health Week and beyond, which urge the public to be prepared, travel differently, eat differently, and green their work and home.

For Immediate Release
Contact: Media Relations, (202) 777-2509
media.relations@apha.org



American Public Health Association

800 I Street, NW Washington, DC 20001-3710
(Ph) 202-777-APHA (Fax) 202-777-2533