How Climate Affects Community Health

A Social Media Toolkit for Engaging Local Communities in Climate and Health Adaptation
Communities across the country are working together to prepare for and respond to the health effects associated with a changing climate.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), through the Climate-Ready States and Cities Initiative (CRSCI), is helping health departments identify likely climate impacts in their communities, potential health effects associated with these impacts, and the populations most likely to be at risk.

CRSCI helps grantees from 16 states and two cities use the Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) framework to develop and implement adaptation plans to protect their communities.

This social media toolkit was developed to support CRSCI grantees in their communication efforts. The toolkit includes suggested post copy, shareable graphics, videos and best practices. Tips on using this content to engage audiences and boost the reach of messages are included throughout the toolkit.

BRACE  Building Resilience Against Climate Effects
Building a Coordinated Community Response

CRSCI grantees are working with community partners to develop a coordinated response to climate-related health effects. This cross-cutting work takes many forms, such as working with physicians to develop education initiatives, tapping community organizations and schools to access and support at-risk populations, working with local hospitals to monitor and track health trends, and engaging media outlets to report on health risks and spread knowledge of available resources.

In addition to boosting engagement and reach on your social media posts, tagging local groups can support the development of a coordinated community response.

Consider engaging with:

- Hospitals
- Healthcare providers
- Schools and school districts
- Community organizations and faith-based groups
- Media and meteorologists
- Local municipal entities, including:
  - Planning and zoning commissions
  - Housing and community development agencies
  - Transportation services
  - First responders
  - Energy and utility companies
  - Office of Sustainability
  - Wildlife and forestry management
Tips for Engaging with Partners on Social Media

- **Use #ClimateChangesHealth** in all of your social posts to help create a unified voice around this topic.

- **Include other related hashtags** when appropriate to expand the reach of your posts (such as #ClimateAction, #climate, #PublicHealth, #Inclusion4Health, #BeatTheHeat, #HeatSafety, #wildfires).

- **On Twitter**, mention other accounts by using their handle starting with the @ symbol. Make sure the @ mention is in the body of the tweet; if you place it at the beginning, the tweet becomes a direct reply to that account and will not show up on your Twitter feed. 
  NOTE: TWEETS ARE LIMITED TO 280 CHARACTERS.

- **On Facebook**, tag an organization in your post by using the ‘@’ sign and selecting it from the dropdown list of accounts (start to type the account name after the “@” sign to help make the option appear). 
  NOTE: MOBILE TAGGING ONLY WORKS IN FACEBOOK’S MOBILE APP, NOT THE MOBILE SITE.

- **Include visual elements** such as photos and graphics, to increase post engagement.

**Tip:** Reminders of these helpful tips appear in boxes like this one throughout the toolkit.
Shared Messaging Opportunities

The following timeline indicates CRSCI shared messaging opportunities based on specific public health days and seasonal trends. These suggested dates and phases are intended to provide guidance in coordinating communication efforts across states and cities for the purposes of creating a unified voice.

Using the suggested content, grantees from across the country can plan to post on key public health dates to highlight climate-related health effects.

In addition to specific grantee posting dates, grantees affected by the following seasonal effects can refer to this timeline for suggested messaging phases. Content for these phases can be found on the following pages and are intended to be used based on specific grantee needs.

- **#HeartHealthMonth**: Cardiovascular health risks
  - Feb. 5, 2019

- **#WorldHealthDay**: General connection between a changing climate and health
  - Apr. 7, 2019

- **#AsthmaAwarenessMonth**: Respiratory health effects
  - May 7, 2019

- **#NationalSeniorCitizensDay**: Older adults are at higher risk of climate-related health effects
  - Aug. 21, 2019

- **#WorldMentalHealthDay**: Mental health impacts of severe weather events
  - Oct. 10, 2019

- **MAR - MAY**
  - *Pollen Season*: Increased temperatures and changing weather patterns can increase the length and severity of pollen season

- **JUN - AUG**
  - *Summer*: Hotter and more frequent extreme heat waves

- **JUN - NOV**
  - *Hurricane Season (Atlantic)*: Stronger and more frequent storms and flooding

- **MAR - SEP**
  - *Disease Outbreaks*: Fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes begin to hatch and experience longer lifespans

- **DEPENDS ON REGION**
  - *Wildfire Season*: Increased wildfire activity can release harmful particles into the air

- **JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JULY AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC**
Feb. 5, 2019: Heart Health Month

Changes to the climate such as more frequent and more severe extreme heat, extreme cold, and air pollution can aggravate heart conditions. Talk to your doctor about what you can do to protect yourself and your family.

#ClimateChangesHealth #HeartHealthMonth

April 7, 2019: World Health Day

A lot can change with the changing climate — including your health. Higher temperatures, increased rainfall, and more frequent extreme weather all pose significant health impacts for our community.

#ClimateChangesHealth #WorldHealthDay

May 7, 2019: Asthma Awareness Day

Rising temperatures and changes in rainfall in [State/City Name] can increase airborne allergens that can aggravate asthma. Talk to your doctor about how these changes could affect you and your family.

#ClimateChangesHealth #AsthmaAwarenessDay
August 21, 2019: Senior Citizen Day

A changing climate puts [State/City Name] at greater risk for heat waves, flooding, and extreme weather. While these changes put everyone at risk, older adults are often the most affected. Check on your older neighbors throughout severe weather events. #ClimateChangesHealth #NationalSeniorCitizensDay

October 10, 2019: World Mental Health Day

Our changing climate can bring more frequent and more extreme weather events. High levels of anxiety and post-traumatic stress are increasing among survivors and first responders who live through these events — even among people with no history of mental illness. Find out what resources are available to you and your community. #ClimateChangesHealth #WorldMentalHealthDay

As extreme weather becomes more frequent, #anxiety and #PTSD increases for survivors and #FirstResponders who live through these events. Find out what resources are available in your community. #ClimateChangesHealth #WorldMentalHealthDay
The posts on the following pages contain topic-specific social media posts about climate and health.

**These posts work best when they are combined with custom links to local resources and calls to action.**

If your community networks don’t have relevant supporting information, the CDC has online resources for each topic. The links can be found at the bottom of each section of the toolkit content.
Can’t stand the heat? As our climate changes, people in urban areas known as ‘urban heat islands’ are at a higher risk for heat exhaustion and heat stroke. [State/City Name] is taking steps to ensure everyone has a place to beat the heat — find a cooling center near you. #ClimateChangesHealth

Can’t stand the heat? As our climate changes, people in areas known as #urbanheatislands are at a higher risk for heat-related illness. [State/City Name] is taking steps to ensure everyone has a place to beat the heat. #ClimateChangesHealth #ExtremeHeat

Tip: Make this content more relevant for your community. Customize the call-to-action to highlight your community’s resources for extreme heat events. Link to localized information.

At-Risk Groups

Extreme Heat events from our changing climate are affecting more people in our community. This summer, [State/City Name] is taking steps to protect those who are most at risk. #ClimateChangesHealth

#ExtremeHeat events from our changing climate are affecting more people in our community. This summer, [State/City Name] is taking steps to protect those who are most at risk. #ClimateChangesHealth
Heat-Related Illness

Extreme heat can aggravate an existing chronic illness and lead to serious medical conditions that require emergency treatment. Stay safe this summer. Learn to spot signs of heat-related illness. #ClimateChangesHealth

Safeguard against #heatstroke and heat exhaustion this summer. Learn to spot signs of heat-related illness. #ClimateChangesHealth

Tip: Include a link with localized information about what residents can do if they have symptoms of heat-related illness.

Additional Information about extreme heat can be found at: www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/temperature_extremes.htm
Storms and Flooding

Flood Safety

Extreme rainfall and hurricanes are increasing the severity and frequency of floods in our community. Flooded roads, sanitary sewer overflows, and structural damage can result in severe health impacts like injury and drowning. Protect yourself by learning how to stay safe, such as avoiding driving in flooded areas. #ClimateChangesHealth

#ExtremeWeather is increasing the severity and frequency of #floods in our community. Protect yourself against injury and drowning during these events by learning how to stay safe, such as avoiding driving in flooded areas. #ClimateChangesHealth

Displacement and Mental Health

As our climate changes, extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and more severe. The stress of preparing for and recovering from storms, as well as forced evacuations, can lead to high levels of anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder — even among people with no history of mental illness. Know what services are available in your community. #ClimateChangesHealth

As our climate changes, #naturaldisasters are becoming more frequent and severe. Preparing for storms and forced evacuations can lead to #anxiety and #PTSD — even among people without a history of #mentalillness. #ClimateChangesHealth

Tip: Include customized information about the mental health resources available in your community.

Additional Information about storms and flooding can be found at: www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/precipitation_extremes.htm.
Air Quality

Allergens

A longer and more intense pollenseason could be in the forecast this year as [State/City Name]’s climate changes. Talk to your doctor about how you can protect your family against increased allergies and asthma attacks. #ClimateChangesHealth

Wildfires

Fine particulates in wildfire smoke can penetrate deep into the lungs, increasing the risk of significant health problems — especially among children, older adults, and people with existing respiratory and cardiovascular problems. Listen and watch for news or health warnings about smoke in your area. #ClimateChangesHealth

Additional Information
about wildfires can be found at: www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/wildfires.htm

Additional information about allergens can be found at: www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/allergen.htm
Disease Outbreaks

Vectorborne Disease

The warmer weather in [State/City Name] can mean diseases transmitted by mosquitoes, fleas and ticks can multiply faster, spread farther, and infect more people. Protect yourself by using insect repellent, wearing long sleeves and pants, and checking for ticks after spending time outdoors. #ClimateChangesHealth

Warmer weather in [State/City Name] can mean diseases transmitted by mosquitoes, fleas & ticks multiply faster, spread farther & transmit disease to more people. Use insect repellent & check for ticks after spending time outdoors. #ClimateChangesHealth

Waterborne Illness

Higher temperatures and changes in rainfall can create ideal conditions for disease-causing bacteria to thrive in standing water. Never let your children play in or drink standing rainwater and check local alerts before taking that lap in the lake. #ClimateChangesHealth

Higher temperatures and changes in rainfall create ideal conditions for diarrheal disease-causing bacteria to thrive. Don’t play in standing rainwater and check local alerts before taking that lap in the lake. #ClimateChangesHealth

Additional information about waterborne illness can be found at: www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/food_waterborne.htm

Additional information about vectorborne disease can be found at: www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/vectors.htm

Additional information about insect repellant can be found at: www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-you
Find more resources for communicating about climate and health adaptation at CDC.gov/climateandhealth