



Clean Air is a Health Imperative: The Perspective from Health Professionals

Clean air is essential to health

We all need clean air to breathe – yet many Americans live where air pollutants are making us sick, making us miss days from work and school, and contributing to unnecessary premature deaths.

We as health professionals endorse policies that reduce air pollutants and climate change.

Ground-level ozone or Smog: widespread and dangerous

Ground-level ozone is the most prevalent air pollutant in the U.S. and a dangerous health hazard. It can cause asthma attacks, permanent lung damage, the exacerbation of chronic lung and heart diseases, and can affect fetal development. The current ozone standard is out of date; new studies show the need for a more health-protective standard. That won't necessarily hurt economic growth: since 1970, ozone emissions have been cut by 70%, while our economy has grown by over 230 percent.

We favor strengthening the new ozone standard and allowing the EPA to protect our health.

Clean Power Plan will tackle a major threat to the nation's health: climate change.

Gases that trap heat are produced by burning fossil fuels and are a major contributor to increased temperatures and climate change. Reducing this carbon pollution through the Clean Power Plan will help protect us from heat waves, extreme weather, infectious diseases and ground-level ozone. By transitioning from coal to clean energy, we cut carbon pollution at the source.

Cutting carbon pollution will also reduce other pollutants to improve health and save lives

Coal-fired power plants emit sulfur dioxide (permanent, irreversible lung damage), nitrogen oxides (lung damage, ground-level ozone precursor) and mercury (known brain toxin) and contribute to lethal fine-particulate pollution (heart impacts, respiratory disease, cancer). Under the Clean Power Plan, every \$1 invested in cleaning up carbon pollution American families will see up to \$4 in health benefits. By 2030, the Clean Power will prevent up to 3,600 premature deaths, 1,700 heart attacks, 90,000 asthma attacks and 300,000 missed work and school days each year. These protections will benefit communities everywhere and are especially important for those at highest risk: living downwind from coal plants in urban low-income communities and communities of color.

Not just health; also, flexibility and economic advancement

The Clean Power Plan is a flexible approach, allowing states to draft their own plans for reducing carbon emissions. The CPP will create jobs -- a health issue, because health suffers when people are unemployed. Employment in clean energy and energy efficiency provide well-paid jobs that are clean and safe, and are located in U.S. communities.

We need to fully implement America's CLEAN POWER PLAN. Doing so will reduce heat-trapping gases and help limit climate change. It will also create immediate health benefits for everyone by reducing soot- and smog-causing pollution. Our state should be jumping at the opportunity to protect our citizens' health by replacing dirty fossil fuels with clean renewable energy and energy efficiency.