

## Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health Consensus Statement

**Editor's note:** *The following was adopted by the Rhode Island Medical Society in March 2020, along with Affiliates of the Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health ([medsocietiesforclimatehealth.org](http://medsocietiesforclimatehealth.org)) regarding the health threats of climate change and the health benefits of solutions (decreasing fossil fuel use).*

We – the undersigned medical societies – support the international scientific consensus, as established in multiple national and international assessments, that the Earth is rapidly warming, and that human actions (especially burning of fossil fuels) are the primary causes. As established in the 2016 U.S. Climate and Health Assessment – The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment – the resulting changes in our climate are creating conditions that harm human health through extreme weather events, reduced air and water quality, increases in infectious and vector-borne diseases, and other mechanisms. While climate change threatens the health of every American, some people are more vulnerable and are most likely to be harmed, including: infants and children; pregnant women; older adults; people with disabilities; people with pre-existing or chronic medical conditions, including mental illnesses; people with low-income; and indigenous peoples, some other communities of color, and immigrants with limited English proficiency.

As medical professionals, many of our members know

firsthand the harmful health effects of climate change on patients. We know that addressing climate change through reduction in fossil fuel use will lead to cleaner air and water, to immediate health benefits for Americans, and will help to limit global climate change.

We support educating the public and policymakers in government and industry about the harmful human health effects of global climate change, and about the immediate and long-term health benefits associated with reducing greenhouse gas emissions (i.e., heat-trapping pollution) and taking other preventive and protective measures that contribute to sustainability. We support actions by physicians and hospitals within their workplaces to adopt sustainable practices and reduce the carbon footprint of the health delivery system.

We recognize the importance of health professionals' involvement in policymaking at the local, state, national, and global level, and support efforts to implement comprehensive and economically sensitive approaches to limiting climate change to the fullest extent possible.

Our organizations are committed to working with officials at all levels to reduce emissions of heat-trapping pollution, and to work with health agencies to promote research on effective interventions and to strengthen the public health infrastructure with the aim of protecting human health from climate change.