

Meeting Notes and Action Items
NH DHHS Climate and Health Advisory Council Meeting
January 15, 2021 – Webinar format

Meeting Objectives

- Engage with each other and share initiatives impacting climate, weather & health
- Learn about statewide initiatives to improve public health
- Know about any legislative efforts or changing policies
- Inform the NH Climate Health Strategic Plan

Session 1

Keynote: How do you communicate climate issues?

Presented by Ed Maibach, Center for Climate Change Communication - *Bringing the Climate & Health Message Home*

See the attached slides for the full presentation on best practices for effective communication including a summary of evidence-based messages to increase public opinion and action. Included are details about the 'Climate Change and the American Mind' opinion poll that is run every six months that includes helpful information by regions and demographics.

Additional comments from attendees at the post-presentation discussion:

- Social media wasn't created to spread misinformation but it does; need to fight back with facts.
- Public health professionals need to reach out to other trusted members of the community (business leaders, etc.). Encourage people to put their trusted voices behind the truth.
- New research says that it is helpful to call out the myths, rather than ignore them. For example, you can say 'You may have heard something that was untrue...'. Find opportunities to reinforce why the truth is true with evidence or examples.
- People should know about the 'Global Warnings Six Americas' project. A report on climate opinions. Many people in the 'Alarmed' group are taking individual actions like recycling, yet fewer are taking systemic change actions like contacting elected officials.
- Elected officials are put in that position to represent their constituents' views. Out of the 'Alarmed' segment, only one in four individuals are engaged politically. How can we increase that to put system-wide policy solutions in place?
- The most important factor that distinguishes the different groups in the Six Americas is political ideology. The 2nd is age cohort, with younger conservatives much more interested in acting on climate change.
- New research shows that most important messages are those of hope and benefit. If you can only focus your messaging in one place, choose health. Climate solutions = health solutions.
- Encouraging community responses are underway. A good example is the Des Moines Iowa city council that recently decided their town will be 100% clean energy by 2031.

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- You can also engage with trusted sources like meteorologists and subject matter experts from FEMA and Homeland Security.

Session 2: Updates: What are you doing now? Current Statewide Initiatives 2020-21

NH DHHS, DPHS – State Health Department

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| Statewide | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current CDC Grant / \$200,000 per year• Using BRACE Framework for forecasting, projecting, assessing, developing, and evaluation• Improving the data portal - data drives strategies and decisions• Heat-related and other metrics being added• Improve SVI to reflect climate and health issues• Northeast Heat Workgroup to explore regional collaboration• Occupational Health initiatives to explore risks in workplaces |
| Upper Valley | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heat stress |
| Greater Nashua | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heat and urban areas |
| Lakes Region | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ticks and You |
| Seacoast Region | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Great Bay Oysters and Vibrio Testing• Tick-safe training and outreach programs |
| Monadnock Region | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency preparedness training and information campaign• Severe weather |
| Regional Public Health Networks | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Climate and health interventions |
| Climate Change / COVID-19 - Matt Cahillane | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initiatives to engage and include communities around social safety nets, job development/retraining, housing• Helpful to look at the 10 Essential Public Health Services through an equity Lens |
| 2020 Strategic Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Looking back at 2010, 2015, the key themes were designing effective policies, mobilizing partnerships, enhancing the climate and health workforce• This advisory group may need to review and decide if it should be updated in 2021 |

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Partner Updates

The Nature Conservancy

Jim O'Brien

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1. Tackling climate change is the top priority of TNC, nationally and in NH. The organization is taking a bi-partisan approach to policy.
2. The Ad Hoc Emission Commission is promoting science-based goals for emission reduction and supporting upcoming legislation.
3. Working on developing trusting partners while researching ways to work with conservative audiences to determine who they trust (business voices, public health professionals, healthcare providers). They are working with each group to develop stories, key messages and materials, starting with business leaders.
4. Available toolkit: [Can we Talk Climate?](#)
5. New resources will include videos for social media that will include local public health professionals sharing their concerns about climate change.
6. NH TNC will be a part of a new pilot working with pediatricians to help their peers talk to patients and families. TNC is also looking for people to serve on a steering committee and act as partners to raise the voice of the public health community.

Union of Concerned Scientists

Roger Stephenson

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1. This group is connecting science networks with the general public. They look for ways to improve public health and address climate that align with the Regional Public Health Networks priorities including air pollution in NH.
2. Addressing particulate matter can lead to less greenhouse gases and public health benefits.
3. Currently looking at heat index events which have health impacts on vulnerable populations and those that work outside. New research outlines the significant economic impact due to extreme heat and lost work days.
4. Considerations are how to address public health/climate benefits, remembering that public health is the economy, rather than a separate issue.

Cited resources:

- Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate (Dec 2020): [The Lancet](#)
- Resources on Public Health Impacts of Climate Change: [Annotated Bibliography](#)
- Dr. Mark Windt presentation to the NH Emissions Commission (2020) [Full Meeting Emission Commission](#)

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Antioch New England University
Center for Climate Preparedness and Community Resilience

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<http://www.communityresilience-center.org/>

1. Center for Climate Preparedness and Community Resilience worked with NH DHHS to develop a draft Practitioner's Guide to build community resilience to improve and measure public health outcomes. The guide provides basic definition, tools and metrics, and strategies to adapt materials to particular environments. Once completed they will be looking for ways to share the guide at the local level.
2. New Virtual Community of Practice (CoP): multi-week educational effort to address 4 areas to build participants' capacity and develop a roadmap for decision makers.
3. Webinar series: Weathering Change - webinar highlighting new research will be held on January 21st.
4. Climate Change Certificate for Professionals (9-credits): Next 4 week course will be taught by an equity consultant: Views that Matter - Race and Climate Change.

Greater Monadnock Public Health Network (PHN)
Partnership with Southwest Regional Planning Commission

Henry Underwood

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<http://www.swrpc.org/chap>

1. Funded by NH DHHS Climate Program to use BRACE framework to assess weather and climate hazards. Prioritized extreme precipitation and flooding as the main problem.
2. Developed a training Workshop on home emergency preparedness and stay-at-home kits. They are striving to understand community needs in the Monadnock area via surveys and interviews. Data trends have been identified and they are talking with various community groups.
3. Developed intervention dealing with emergency preparedness for trusted voices of professionals to deliver at senior centers already working with the community: Repeated the [ReadyNH messages](#) of *["Stay informed. Have a Plan. Make a Kit. Get involved."](#)*
4. Leading discussions on Hazard Mitigation planning.
5. Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation: They coordinate efforts in the region for walking and biking (good for health and reduces emissions).
6. Update to the "Healthy Monadnock" website, including a focus on "BRACE" and emergency preparedness: [Healthy Monadnock Alliance](#)
7. Plan and Results: [Southwest Region Planning Commission](#).

Seacoast Public Health Network (PHN)

Julia Meuse

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1. Funded by NH DHHS to assess climate hazards, and prioritized habitat change and rise in ticks as the main problem.
2. Tick borne Illness Prevention Training- trained staff, camps, after school programs.
3. Developing online models that will be available via UNH Cooperative Extension.
4. Clinicians Module available via AHEC.
5. Convening Coastal Adaptation Workgroup.

NH Department of Safety

Meghan Wells, Hazard Mitigation Officer

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1. BRIC (Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities) is a new Federal funding opportunity via FEMA for hazard mitigation planning and infrastructure projects.
2. Building Codes Project to identify codes to strengthen and educate officials.
3. Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant Resources and Information - [HMA Programs](#)
4. Hazard Mitigation Assistance Flyer – [Hazard Mitigation Assistance Flyer](#)

Department of Environmental Services

Sherry Godlewski

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1. Engaging statewide partners such as [Upper Valley Adaptation Workgroup](#) (UVAW, Lebanon area) and [Coastal Adaptation Workgroup \(CAW\)](#)
2. DES also plans to do community resilience building with The Nature Conservancy.

US Geological Survey (USGS)

Joe Ayotte

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<https://www.usgs.gov/centers/new-england-water>

1. Published Paper: Assessing Impact of Drought on Private Wells in collaboration with the CDC. Identified increased exposure to arsenic
2. Field scale - looking at private and public seacoast wells and how they are impacted by drought and seasonal changes.
3. Published a paper on shallow well design benefits.

Coastal Program, Department of Environmental Services

Kirsten Howard

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<https://www.des.nh.gov/water/coastal-waters>

1. Neighborhood Technical Assistance Program for those vulnerable to coastal flooding and sea rise. They meet with individual homeowners to identify issues and options.
2. Neighborhood Intervention: Partnerships with public health networks to address issues from a neighborhood perspective versus individual homeowners. They can reach more people using this approach.

Session 3: Next Steps & Action Items

- CHI staff to send any notes and handouts within a week
- Matt and Katie to continue with current NH DHHS interventions to build preparedness, reduce tick exposure, explore community resilience.
- Matt to pursue expanding the Climate Advisory group to include invitations to North Country, larger cities, NH Medical Society, etc.
- Suggestions to focus the Advisory group efforts on specific issues.
 1. Develop an Advisory subgroup for communication and messaging issues
 2. Develop an Advisory subgroup to identify equity issues; Public Health networks could be trusted messengers and play a larger role to promote climate and health issues. Carol Totskay recommends reaching out to the Minority Health Coalition
 3. Plan to invite staff from DHHS Equity Council Leader, Christin Durzey who works on diversity and equity issues. Matt can add this person to the mailing list of people interested in climate issues.
- Matt and DPHS leaders to pursue CDC funding to better assess health impacts
 - 2022 CDC funding forecast indicates next funding opportunity to be released in February and due by April 2021
 - Major focus to include expanded work to identify health impacts, improve interventions for community resilience, and promote systems level change inside of organizations.
- CDC climate funding will likely shift focus towards building community-level resilience, rather than individual training or engagement
- Participants who are interested in joining a Climate Communications workgroup can contact Matt Cahillane at matthew.cahillane@dhhs.nh.gov

Handouts/Resources from the Chat:

1. Participant List
2. Slides from the keynote presentation - Ed Maibach
3. Slides from the updates presentation - DHHS Climate Program

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Resources from the Webinar Chat:

- Ed Maibach. Limiting global warming to 1.5 to 2.0°C—A unique and necessary role for health professionals. [PLOS Medicine May 14, 2019](#)
- Ed Maibach. [Climate Change is Harming Our Health.](#) The Medical Consortium on Climate and Health, 2020
- Web portal with regional information for clear, simple messaging and graphics on climate issues. [Climate Central](#)
- Project to work with NH meteorologist on climate issues. Plymouth State University faculty member Dr. Lisa Doner: [Plymouth State University Faculty](#)
- NH Survey Center findings on climate opinions. Dr. Larry Hamilton: [UNH Carsey School of Public Policy](#)
- [Survey Finds Majority of Voters Support Initiatives to Fight Climate Change – broken link?](#)
- Antioch NEU climate studies. [View that Matter: Race and Opinions on Climate Change](#)
- Antioch NEU conference on March 16th to May 31st, 2021. [Climate Preparedness Community of Practice](#)
- UCS report on heat stress and climate. [Killer Heat in the United States](#)
- Policy initiatives at the State level. [NH Emissions Commission Report. Full Meeting Emission Commission](#)
- CDC BRACE Framework. [Building Resilience Against Climate Effects](#)
- [Healthy Monadnock Alliance](#)
- NH Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Projects and local grants for emergency preparedness. [Hazard Mitigation Assistance Flyer](#)

Next Meeting Date:

Planned for June 2021. A specific date will be sent to members in March/April.