

The Health Care Climate Challenge Registration

Pledge

A leadership pledge by hospitals, health centers, and health systems across the globe

Climate change, as The Lancet Commission put it in 2009, is “the biggest public health threat of the 21st century.” Since then, the climate crisis has only deepened, and the science has become increasingly irrefutable, heightening the urgency for action.

We know climate change is already exacerbating a wide range of health problems around the world. As the earth warms, infectious diseases like malaria and dengue are spreading to new locations, threatening to reverse hard-won health gains in many parts of the planet. Heat waves are growing in intensity and number, killing tens of thousands outright and aggravating asthma, heart disease, and heat stroke. Increasingly severe storms, droughts, fires, and floods, harm human health and put oft-overstretched and ill-prepared health systems at risk.

We pledge to do our part to meet the challenge posed by climate change – a test perhaps as great as human civilization has ever known – by taking the following steps:

Reduce our own climate footprint: Our collective vision is to reduce our health care systems’ emissions, moving toward low-carbon, and ultimately, carbon-neutral health care. Many hospitals are major energy consumers and can make large reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Other hospitals and health systems are energy-starved and can deploy renewable energy to foster greater access to health care and better health outcomes. We pledge to lead the way toward low-carbon health care by setting greenhouse gas reduction targets. We will work to implement energy efficiency measures and, when feasible, deploy clean renewable energy to power our buildings. We will measure and report on our progress, including financial savings related to these actions. We will also seek to identify our institutions’ other climate impacts, including transportation systems, use of anesthetic gases, purchasing policies, waste generation, and disposal. We will develop and implement plans to reduce these impacts as well.

Prepare for climate impacts: In order to serve our communities, hospitals and health centers need to remain operational during and after an extreme weather event. We need to understand, anticipate, and be equipped to manage the health needs of our immediate community and prepare for shifting disease patterns. We pledge to prepare for the impacts of climate change by becoming more resilient to increasing incidents of extreme weather. We will work to implement a series of measures to assure our physical infrastructure, staff, and communities are prepared for the immediate impact of extreme weather events and the longer-term impacts of changing patterns of disease, as well as other climate impacts, combining these efforts with low-carbon solutions when possible.

Lead the way to a low-carbon future: As health care providers respected by local communities, government and business, we commit to provide leadership in our societies for a healthy climate. We pledge to do so by educating health care professionals and hospital staff, as well as the communities we serve, on challenges and solutions related to climate and health. We also pledge to encourage public policy, economic development, and investment strategies that move our societies away from fossil fuel dependency and foster instead a healthy energy future, thereby protecting local and global health from fossil fuel combustion and climate change.

By moving toward climate-smart, low-carbon health systems, health care can mitigate its own climate impact, save money, and lead by example. By becoming more resilient, health care can help prepare for the growing impacts of climate change. And by providing societal leadership, we can help forge a vision of a future with healthy hospitals and healthy people living on a healthy planet.

At this crucial juncture, the time to act to protect public health from climate change is now

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President & CEO Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Roxana Jentur". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "R".