National Tribal Climate Change and Health Adaptation Resources and Trainings

Tribes and First Nations Climate Summit
July 30, 2019
Climate and health: an urgent matter

This May:

“This moment is one of extraordinary consequence. Actions taken by all nations over the next decade will determine whether global health will continue to improve or whether it will instead decline—possibly catastrophically so—as a result of climate change.”

“Health professionals can make a critical difference.”
Pala Band of Mission Indians (Northern San Diego, CA)
National collaboration and leadership on climate and health adaptation

Federal funding

Prosper Sustainably

Advisory Group

Climate Ready Tribes

Collaborative Climate Adaptation for Tribal Community Wellbeing

Pala Adaptation
Intertribal Sharing

Capacity Building

Website & Resource Clearinghouse
Trainings & companion tools
Assessment/Plan/Survey Templates
Climate Change and Human Health

Climate change is increasing the number of people at greater risk of human health threats such as illness, injury, death, trauma and other mental and psychosocial consequences.

USGCRP Climate and Health Assessment Key Findings

- Increased exposure to extreme events and coastal flooding will effect health
- Disruptions to essential infrastructure can limit access to healthcare and emergency response services

“Our environment was rich in the wealth of natural resources, providing all our needs, allowing us to live healthy happy lives!”

Puyallup Tribe
Climate changes wellbeing differently in different places

Tribal examples:

- **Pacific Northwest and Great Lakes tribes**: fish, food, and forests
- **Alaska coastal tribes**: thawing, erosion and hunting
- **Navajo**: heat and water insecurity
- **Mojave**: shrinking river (spirituality)
- **Seminole Tribe of Florida**: hurricanes and sea-level rise
- **Lakota (South Dakota)**: Bomb cyclone and flooding
What Climate Change Means for Tribes & Indigenous Peoples

Unique climate-driven challenges

- Each tribal community is unique
- Climate change exacerbates disproportionate health outcomes
- Water and food insecurity
- Arctic warming
- Displacement/relocating may mean loss of culture, community, sovereignty and rights
- Loss of ecological health can mean loss of livelihoods
- Underfunded public health services
- Adaptation involves navigation of complex federal laws, treaty rights, and true engagement, consultation and consent
Tribal Climate Health Project defines health more broadly than the absence of medical disease; encompasses overall wellbeing

• **Human health:** physical and psychological

• **Spiritual and cultural health**

• **Socio-economic health**

"Indigenous health is based on interconnected social and ecological systems that are being disrupted by a changing climate. As these changes continue, the health of individuals and communities will be uniquely challenged by climate impacts to lands, waters, foods, and other plant and animal species. These impacts threaten sites, practices, and relationships with cultural, spiritual, or ceremonial importance that are foundational to Indigenous peoples’ cultural heritages, identities, and physical and mental health."

Key Finding, Fourth National Climate Assessment
Climate changes wellbeing differently in different places

Tribal example: Pala Band of Mission Indians
Pala Climate & Health Impacts

Medium & High Risk Human Health Impacts

- Heat-related stress, illness, and death
- Traumatic injury or death from wildfire and storms and flooding
- Mental health and psychosocial consequences associated with stress and trauma
- Inability to access emergency or health services due to infrastructure and public service disruptions or failures (e.g. power, roads, communications, water treatment)
- Respiratory illness due to higher levels of ozone, particulate matter (including smoke and dust), and indoor mold infestations
- Decrease in fitness activity levels due to heat or unsafe outdoor conditions
- Interruptions of drinking water supply
- Infections due to contact with or ingestion of contaminated water
- Infections due to tick or mosquito borne illness
- Reduced access to affordable and nutritious food due to global crop changes
- Carbon monoxide poisoning due to power outages and use of generators
Many Types of Professionals Can Be Involved

Public Health Planning Approach
- Community Health Assessment
- Community Health Improvement Plan

Climate Adaptation Planning Approach
- Climate Vulnerability Assessment
- Climate Adaptation Plan

Emergency Management Approach
- Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Emergency Management Plan

Initiates more plans, policies, and actions that can be complementary
TCHP Framework and Tools
Based on best practices and designed to incorporate health into adaptation planning

Vulnerability Assessment  
Adaptation Plan

Companion Tools
• Online resource clearinghouse
• Input gathering templates
• **Exposures, Impacts, and Strategies Inventory (EISI) tool**
• Report templates
Psycho-social-spiritual Resilience Strategies

- Protecting and building mental, psychological, social and spiritual wellbeing as part of efforts to adapt to growing stressors and trauma associated with climate change
- Minimize need for formal mental health treatment
- “Most sure-fire way to reduce the human suffering that climate change will inevitably bring” - Bob Doppelt
- Promote sense of safety, calming, efficacy, hope, and connection
- Literature emerging from disaster response and recovery applied to climate change

Pala’s CRT project develops a framework for tribal communities
Pala’s Psycho-social-spiritual Resilience Strategies

Chemphuun Pe’icháschuquell (When our Hearts are Happy)
A Tribal Psychosocial Climate Resilience Framework

Pala Band of Mission Indians
June 2019

Provide health education & psychoeducation

Improve communication

Build connection

Deliver health and psychological first aid resources

Psychosocial Resilience

Connectedness

Safety

Self-Efficacy
Wrapping Up

Key takeaways

• Protect physical and psychosocial wellbeing by ensuring health is a focus in climate planning and climate is considered in health and emergency planning
• Connect with your health professionals and your community
• Join our growing learning community to take advantage of time-saving resources
• You can find trainings, resources, tools, templates fact sheets and other information:
  • Tribalclimatehealth.org
  • ped.palatribe.com/climate-change/
  • facebook.com/tribalclimatehealth/
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