

MLP IN ACTION | WEBINAR SERIES

USING MLP TO UNDERSTAND AND ADDRESS THE HEALTH-HARMING EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE



**January 11, 2024
1 – 2 PM ET**

National Center for Medical  Legal Partnership

Co-Moderators



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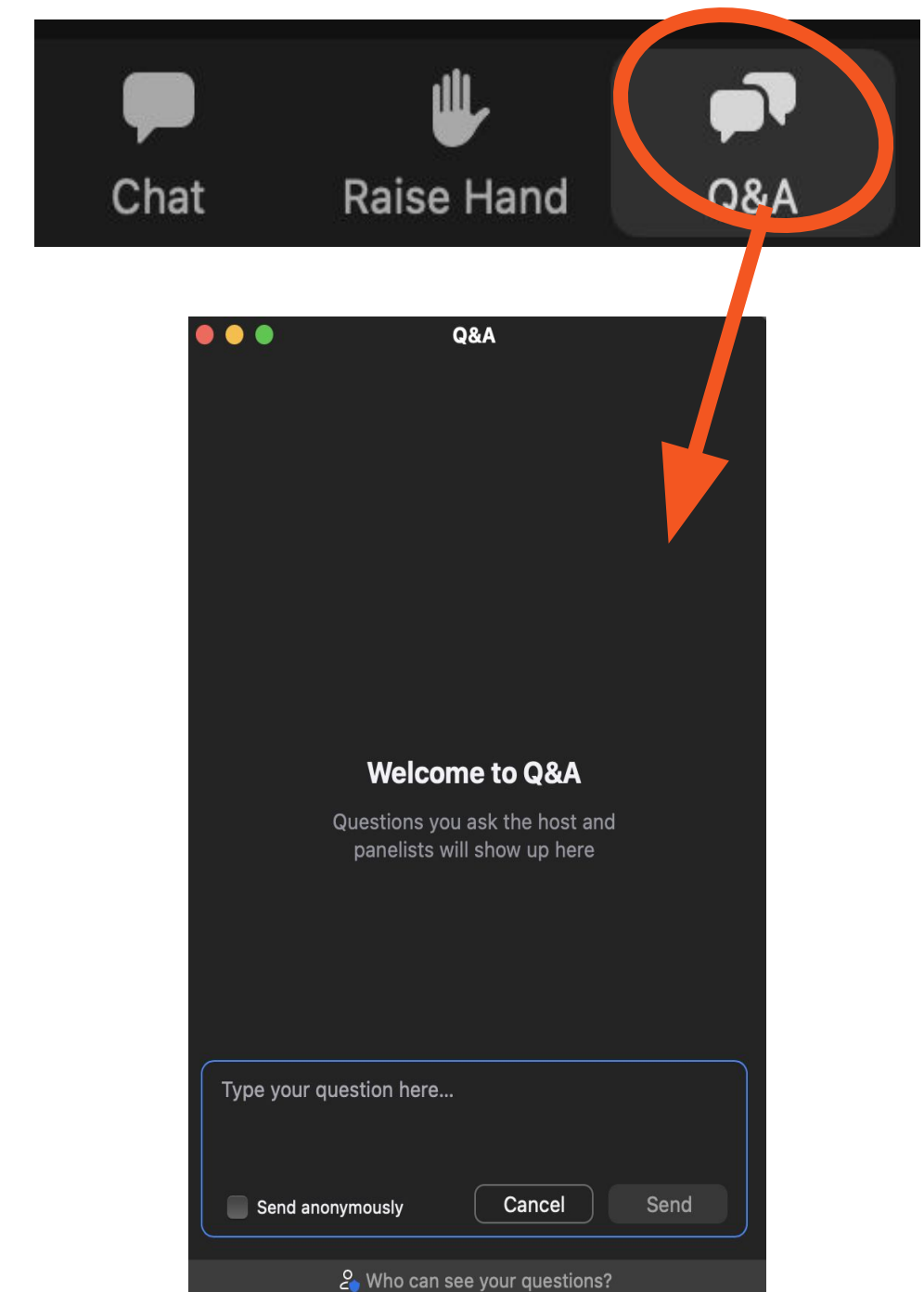
HRSA

Health Resources & Services Administration

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Housekeeping

- Attendees are muted throughout the webinar.
- Type questions into Questions & Answers pane.
- To activate captions, select “Live Transcript” and “Show Subtitle.”
- This webinar will be recorded and shared at medical-legalpartnership.org/resources/
- Send a chat to the Hosts & Panelists for help.



Subject Matter Experts:



Christina Russo Walters

**Senior Managing Attorney
Medical-Legal Partnerships
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Dr. Frederick Anderson

**Associate Professor; Medical Director
Florida International University
Mobile Health Center**

Learning Objectives

- 1 Deepen Your Understanding:**
Expand your knowledge of how climate change disproportionately affects the health outcomes of low-income and underserved patients and communities.
- 2 Empower Through Partnership:**
Use the medical-legal partnership approach to screen patients for climate-induced social risk factors and work collaboratively with legal professionals to address health-harming legal needs or barriers.
- 3 Build Preventative Capacity:**
Develop the skills to proactively use MLPs as a preventative measure, effectively mitigating the health-harming effects associated with climate change.

A stylized blue globe graphic is centered in the background, showing the outlines of continents. The globe is partially obscured by a light gray horizontal band that contains the main title text.

The Medical-Legal Partnership Approach

Where do legal services fit within a health center's response to SDOH?

Social Determinants of Health



SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

are broadly defined by the World Health Organization as the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age. These circumstances are shaped by economic and social policies, political systems, and social norms, and they contribute significantly to health disparities.



SOCIAL NEEDS

are the more immediate, individual needs that patients enter the health center with every day as a result of social determinants of health.



LEGAL NEEDS

are, simply put, the subset of social needs that have legal solutions.

Social Determinants of Health
Copyright-free

Healthy People 2030

Healthy People 2030, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Retrieved 1/2/24, from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health>

What is the Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP) Approach?

Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP) is an intervention where legal and health care professionals collaborate to help patients resolve **social, economic, and environmental factors** that contribute to **health disparities** and have a **remedy in civil law**.

The MLP approach is a **flexible, evidence-based, public health, and social justice intervention** designed to meet the needs of the community.

Legal Assistance

to address patients' social needs & help the health center workforce operate at "top of license"

Training

to build knowledge, capacity & skills that strengthen the health center workforce's response to SDOH

Clinic-Level Changes

that leverage legal expertise to shape clinical practices to address many patients' needs at once

Policy Change Strategies

that advance healthy regulatory, administrative, & legislative policy solutions for whole communities

How Legal Services Help Health Care Address the Social Determinants of Health (I-HELP™)

Common SDOH	How Legal Services Can Help	Impact of Legal Services on Health / Health Care
<p>INCOME & INSURANCE Resources to meet daily basic needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeal denials of food stamps, health insurance, cash benefits, and disability benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing someone's income means s/he makes fewer trade-offs between affording food and health care, including medications. • Being able to afford enough healthy food helps people manage chronic diseases and helps children grow and develop.
<p>HOUSING & UTILITIES A healthy physical environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure housing subsidies • Improve substandard conditions • Prevent evictions • Protect against utility shut-off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A stable, decent, affordable home helps a person avoid costly emergency room visits related to homelessness. • Consistent housing, heat and electricity helps people follow their medical treatment plans.
<p>EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT Quality educational and job opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure specialized education services • Prevent and remedy employment discrimination • Enforce workplace rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A quality education is the single greatest predictor of a person's adult health. • Consistent employment helps provide money for food and safe housing, which also helps avoid costly emergency health care services. • Access to health insurance is often linked to employment.
<p>LEGAL STATUS Access to jobs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolve veteran discharge status • Clear criminal / credit histories • Assist with asylum applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearing a person's criminal history or helping a veteran change their discharge status helps make consistent employment and access to public benefits possible. • Consistent employment provides money for food and safe housing, which helps people avoid costly emergency health care services.
<p>PERSONAL & FAMILY STABILITY Safe homes and social support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure restraining orders for domestic violence • Secure adoption, custody and guardianship for children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less violence at home means less need for costly emergency health care services. • Stable family relationships significantly reduce stress and allow for better decision-making, including decisions related to health care.



Health Center–Based Medical–Legal Partnerships

Health Center Program began with Section 330 of the Public Health Services Act of 1965, and is administered by HRSA

There are approximately 1,400 health centers across the US operating at over 15,000 sites

In 2022, health centers served over 31.5 million patients including:

- 1 in 3 uninsured people
- 1 in 3 people living in poverty
- 1 in 7 rural residents

Health centers provide community–based, patient–directed, comprehensive, and high–quality primary care and preventive services

Health centers also provide enabling services that facilitate access to care. Since 2014, enabling services have include “civil legal aid services” as an example of eligibility assistance and additional enabling/supportive services.

Approximately **150–200 health centers operate MLPs** to embed lawyers in the health center’s health care team to help treat patients’ immediate social needs and deploy upstream strategies to address the social determinants of health.



NCMLP Report:
[Environmental Scan of Medical-Legal Partnerships in Health Centers](#)

A stylized blue globe graphic is centered in the background, showing the outlines of continents and oceans. The globe is partially cut off by the top and bottom edges of the slide.

Using MLP to Understand and Address the Health-Harming Effects of Climate Change



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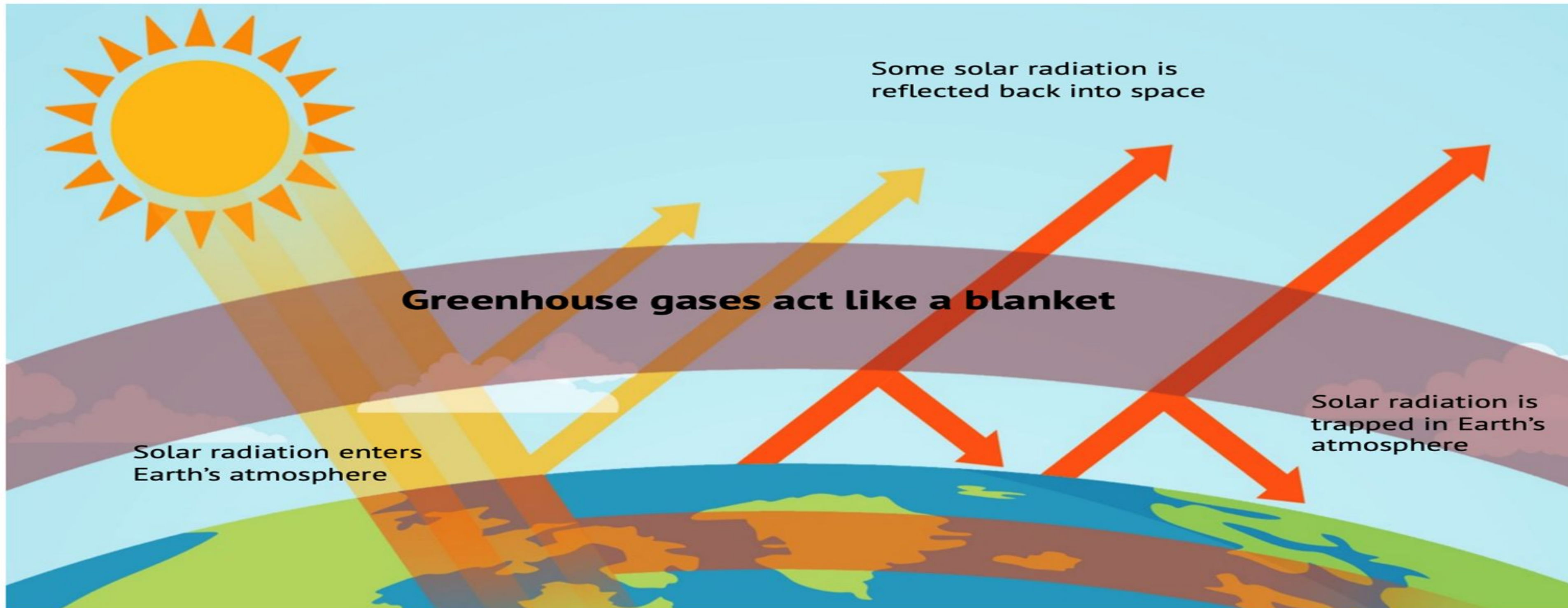
Poll Question

Please tell us about yourself.

Are you a:

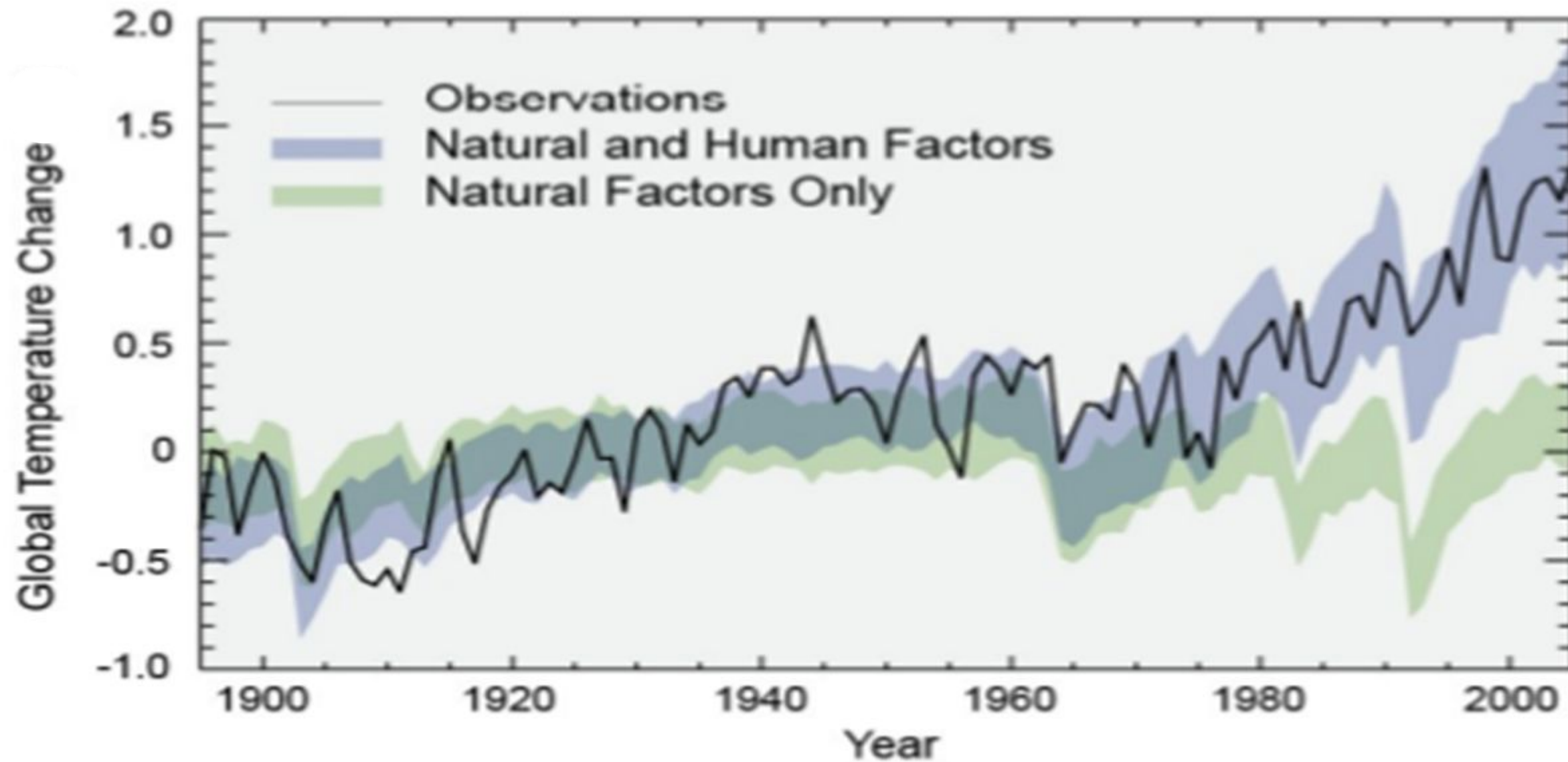
1. Healthcare provider/worker?
2. Legal advocate/lawyer?
3. Other (please feel free to let us know in the chat)

What is Climate Change?



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

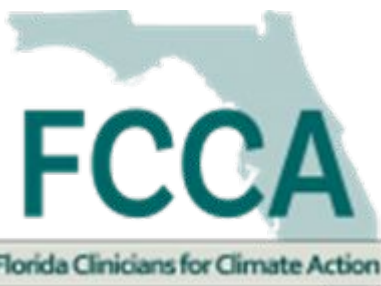
97% of climate scientists agree, mankind is influencing the climate.



Warming 1.4 degrees C so far

NCA Fig 2.3

www.FloridaClinicians.org



Climate Impacts Health



H E A T W A V E

Heat illness

Exacerbate heart and lung conditions

Asthma

Traumatic injury

Water and foodborne illnesses

Allergies

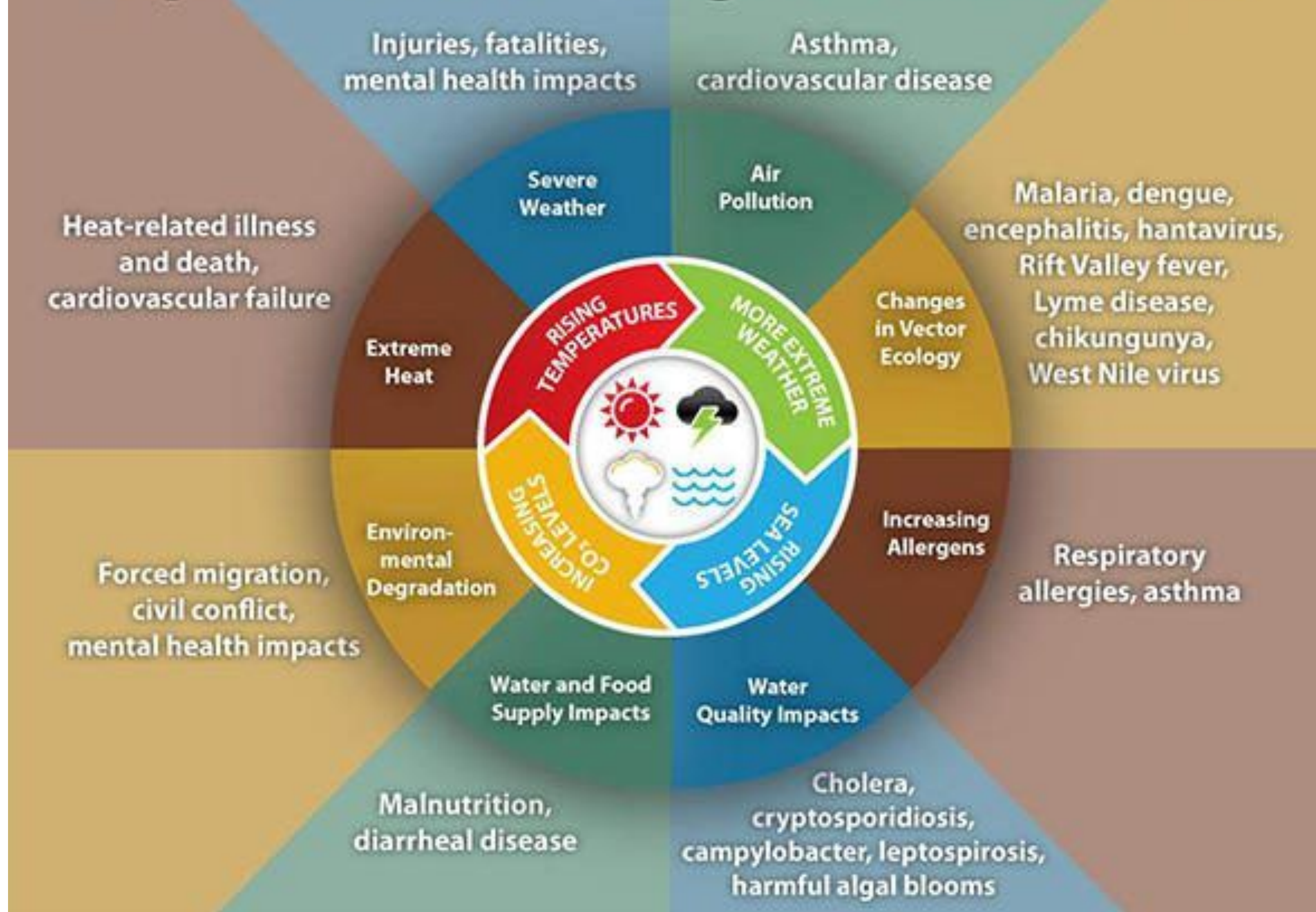
Vector-borne disease

Emotional stress

www.FloridaClinicians.org



Impact of Climate Change on Human Health



Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
<https://aafa.org/advocacy/key-issues/climate-and-health/>

Vulnerable Populations

COMMUNITIES OF COLOR
Some communities of color living in risk-prone areas face cumulative exposure to multiple pollutants.
Adaptation plans that consider these communities and improve access to healthcare help address social inequities.

OLDER ADULTS
Older adults are vulnerable to extreme events that cause power outages or require evacuation.
Checking on elderly neighbors and proper emergency communication can save lives.

CHILDREN
Children have higher risk of heat stroke and illness than adults.
Adults can lessen risk by monitoring exertion and hydration.

LOW INCOME COMMUNITIES
Low income families are at risk of physical and mental illnesses during flooding and in crowded shelter conditions.
Comprehensive disaster management can improve resiliency for people with limited resources.

EPA (National Climate Assessment)

Killer Heat

In Florida, there is a historical average of 25 days per year with a heat index “feels like” temperature above **100 degrees** Fahrenheit.

This would increase to 105 days per year on average by midcentury (2036-2065) and 141 by the century’s end.

FIGURE 2. More People Are at Risk as the Heat Index Rises

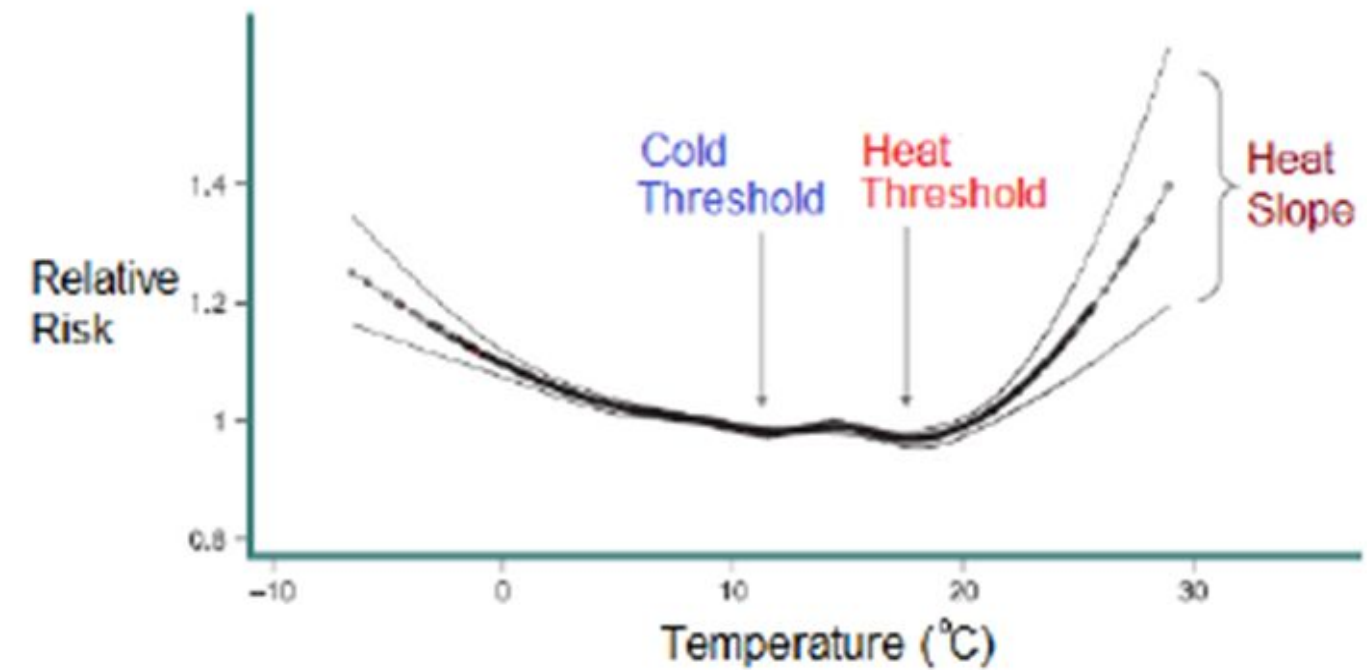
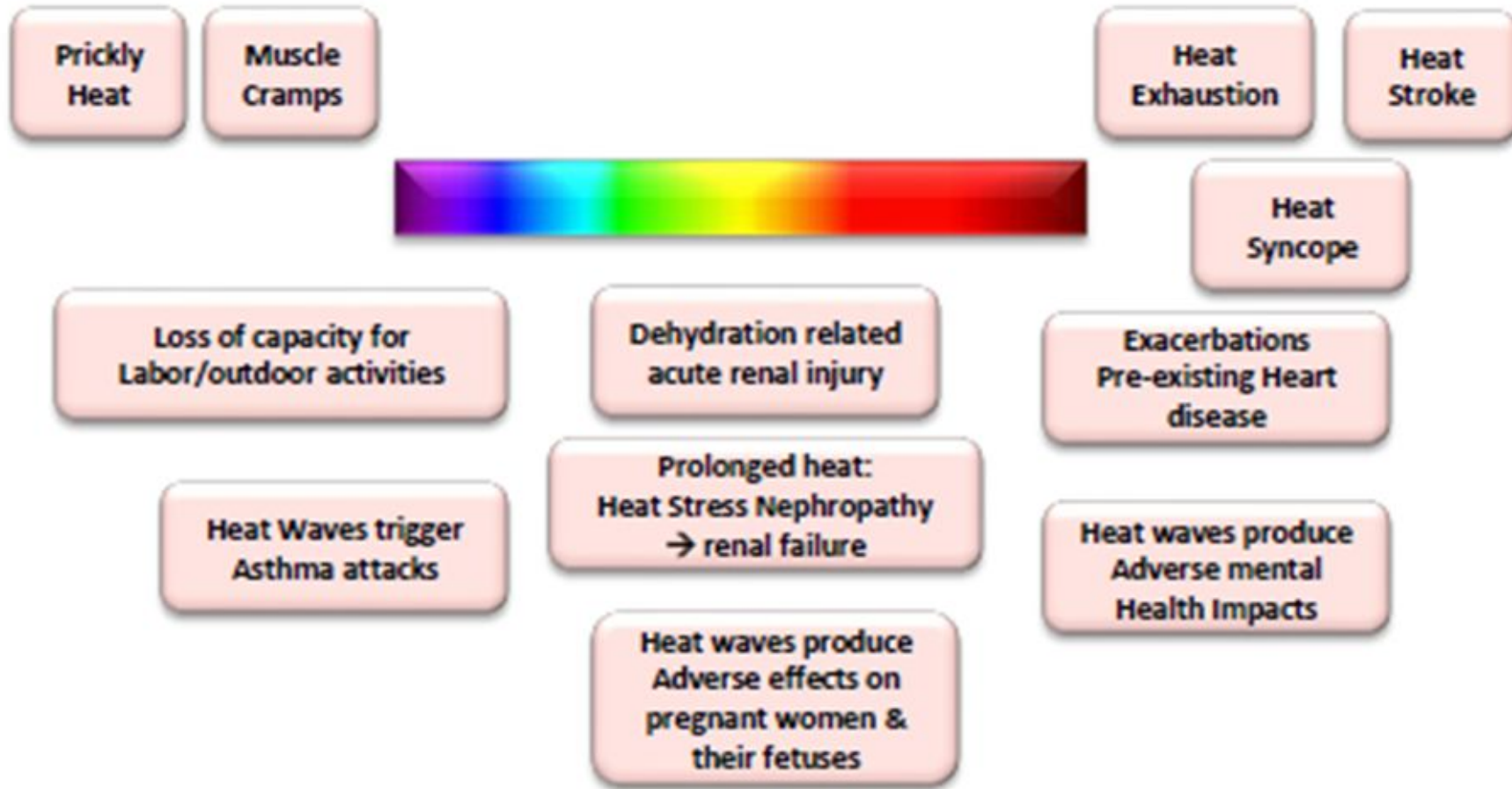


Heat index conditions as low as 80°F can affect human health. Extreme heat exposure affects people differently depending on their health and environment. Certain groups of people may become more susceptible to heat-related illness as the heat index rises.

SOURCES: IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY 2019; MORRIS ET AL. 2019; NWS 1984; NWS N.D. B; OSHA N.D.



Human Health Hazards of Excess Heat



2003 European Heat wave killed > 35,000

All risk mortality, London 1976-2003

Risk Factors for Serious Heat-Related Injury

- Dehydration
- Obesity
- Heavy clothing
- Poor physical fitness
- Cardiovascular disease
- Skin diseases (burns, eczema, scleroderma, and psoriasis)
- Febrile illnesses
- Hyperthyroidism
- Drugs
 - ☐ abuse (cocaine, alcohol, amphetamines, opiates, LSD, and PCP)
 - ☐ Medications (beta blockers, diuretics, anticholinergics, antipsychotics, Ca⁺ channel blockers, alpha agonists, sympathomimetics)
- Poor socioeconomic conditions

Body's Heat regulation Methods

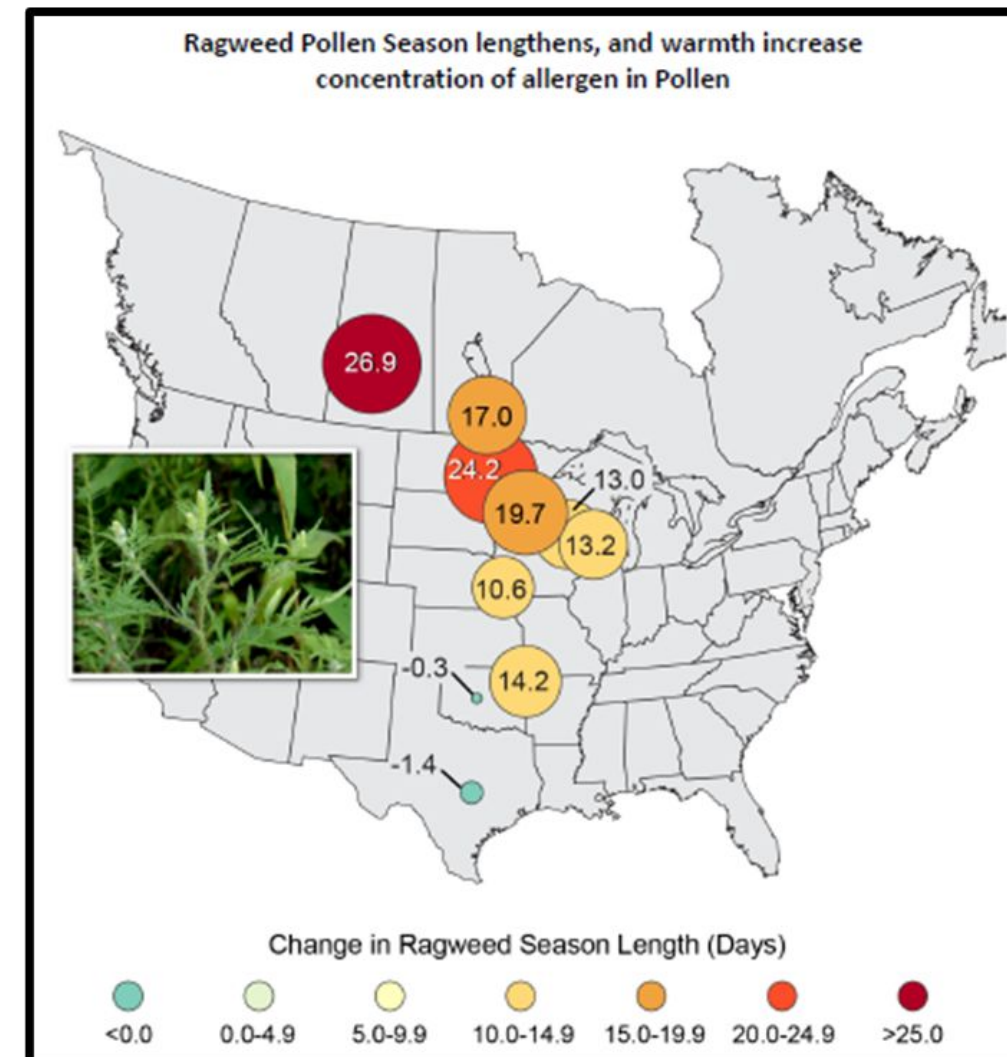
- Evaporation – cooling from perspiration
- Conduction- direct contact with hot/cold surface
- Convection – air or fluid movement
- Radiation – exchange of electromagnetic waves

Accomplished by: sweating, increased cardiac output, redirection of blood toward the skin,
And behavior, attire, habitat, and technological aids

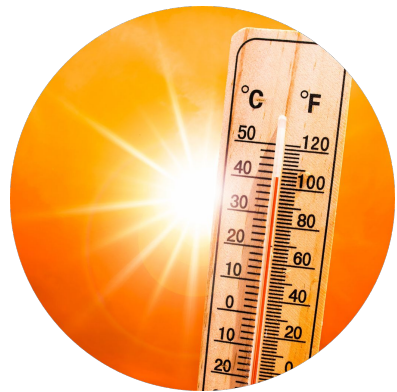
Courtesy of Dr. Aileen Marty, FIU

Worsened Air Quality/Allergens

- Excess Moisture/Flooding and Severe Droughts in other areas.
- Wildfires - Air Pollution
- Impact on respiratory illnesses
- Warmer temps - Longer Pollen Season



Some ways in which Climate Change impacts Respiratory Illness



HEAT



POLLEN



SMOKE



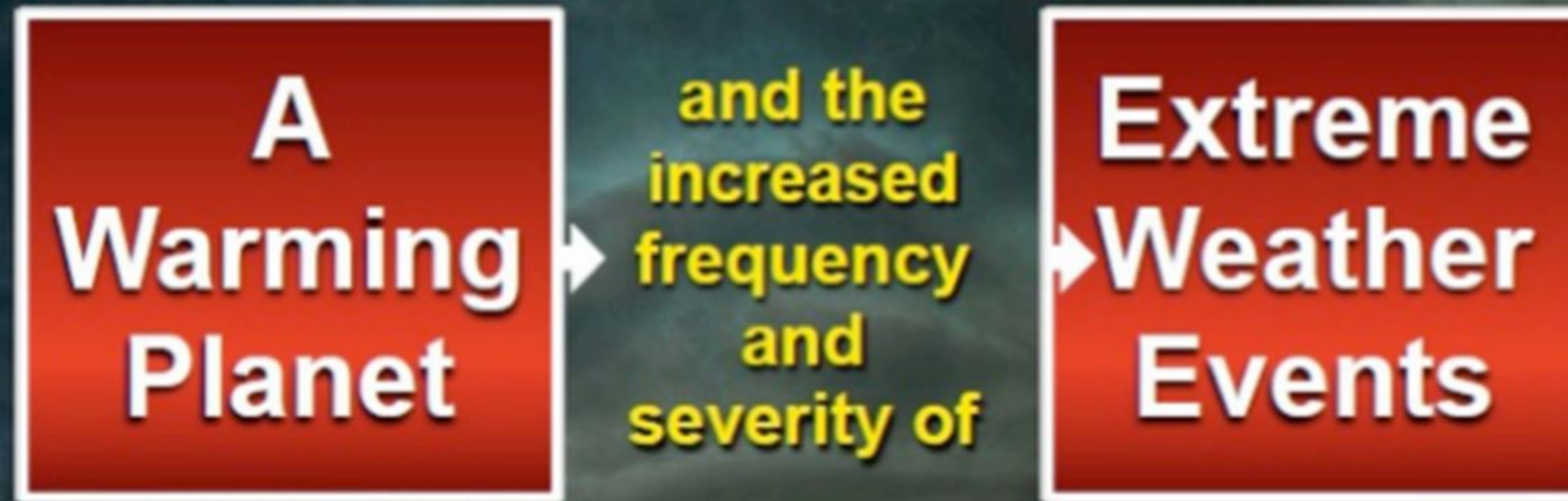
MOLD



SMOG

- Heat waves more dust mites > trigger Asthma attacks
- Heat + drought > wildfires > smoke can trigger Asthma attacks
- Low pressure systems > storms > flooding > mold > trigger Asthma, allergies, headaches, sepsis
- Increased ground temperature > selects for subtypes of organisms that can survive in warmer temperature > emerging infections
- Elevated CO2 increases: amount of pollen, toxin levels in pollen, mold
- Smog, Ground Level Ozone - powerful lung irritant

There is a linkage between:



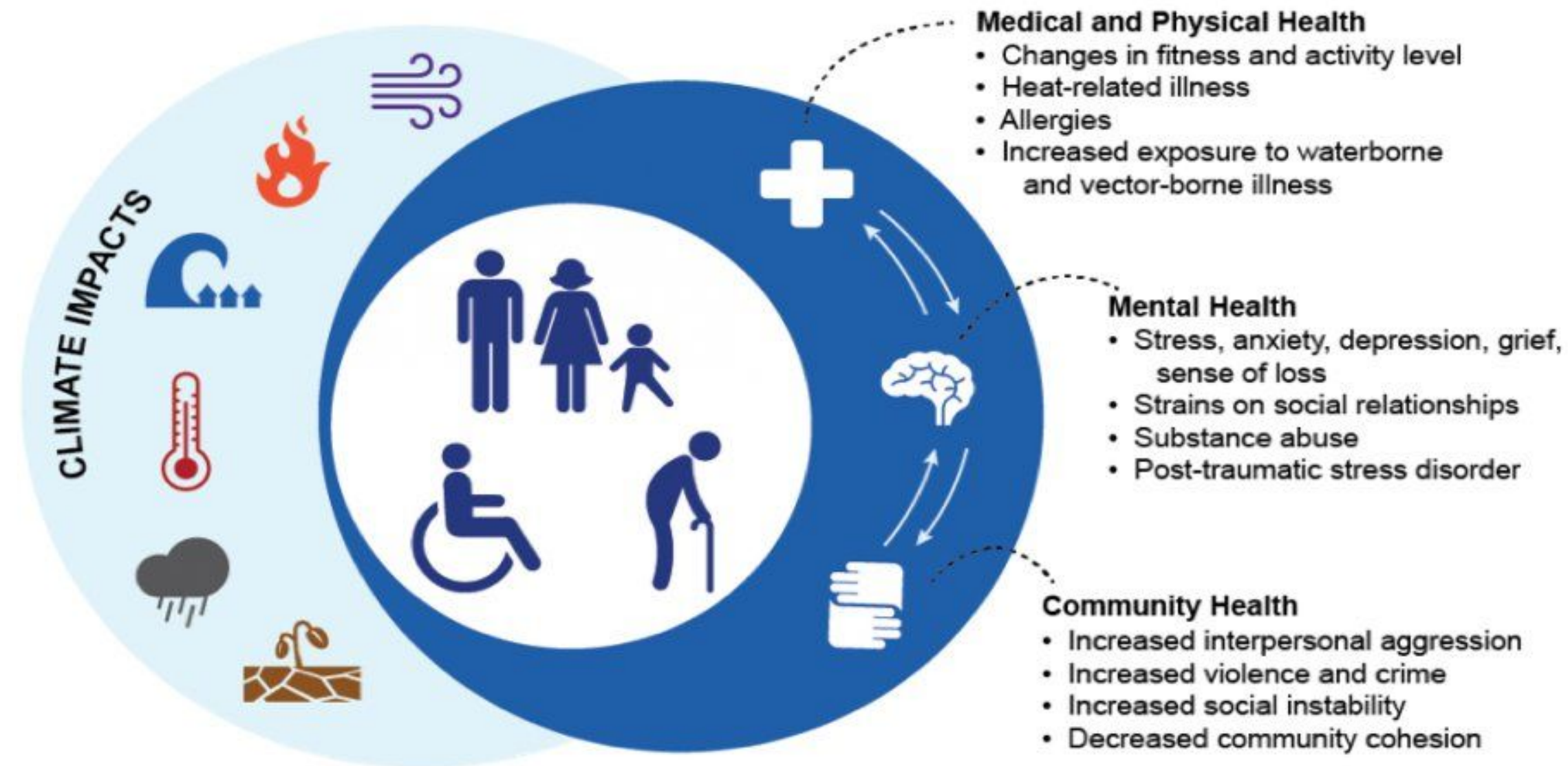
As ocean temperatures increase, they evaporate more moisture into the sky.

Warmer air can also **hold** a lot more water vapor.

So we get more (and bigger) storms and more extreme weather.

© 2010 Sean R. Hevey

An Illustration on How Climate Change Impacts Physical, Mental, and Community Health



At the center of the diagram are human figures representing adults, children, older adults, and people with disabilities. The left circle depicts climate impacts including air quality, wildfire, sea level rise and storm surge, heat storms, and drought. The right circle shows the three interconnected health domains that will be affected by climate impacts--Medical and Physical Health, Mental Health, and Community Health.

Image source: U.S. Global Change Research Program. 2016. The impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment.

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND SCIENTISTS WARN OF SPREADING INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

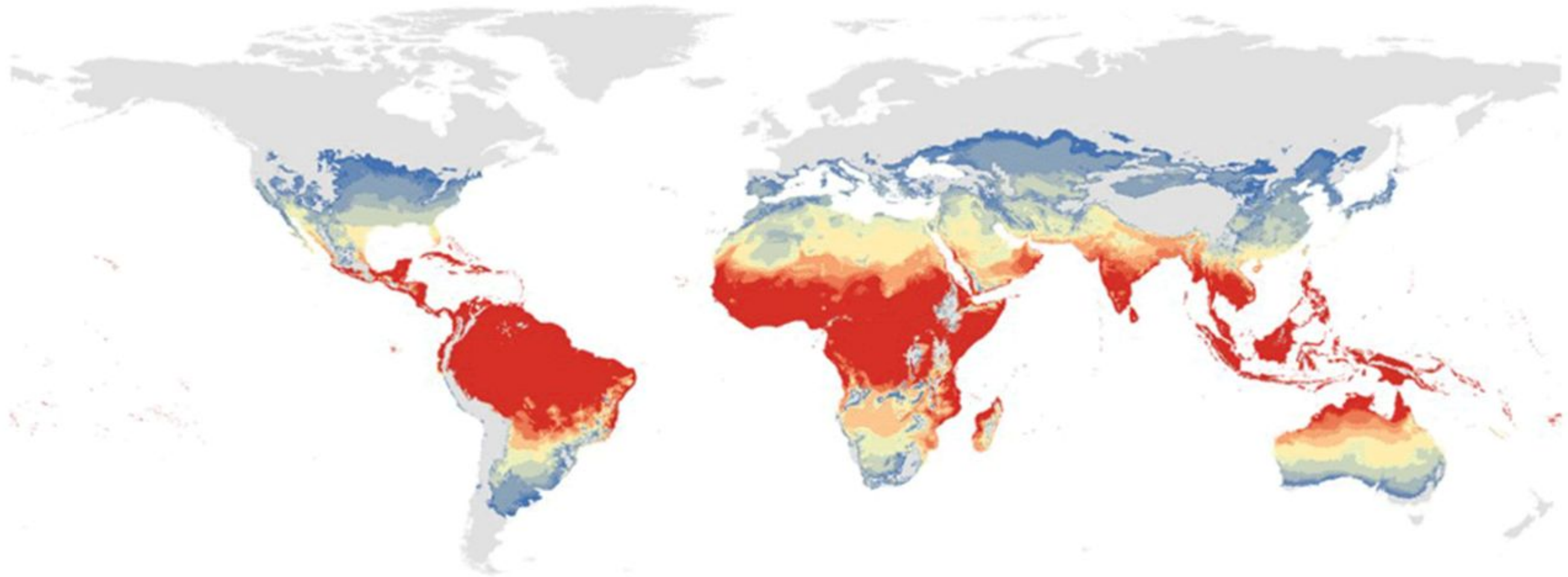
Global Warming's greatest threat may also be the smallest.



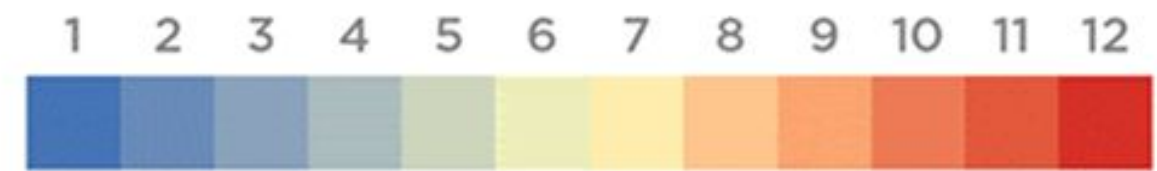
2019

Mosquito Habitat: Current & Projected

THIS PROJECTION IS BASED ON A WORST-CASE SCENARIO WITH THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE UNMITIGATED.



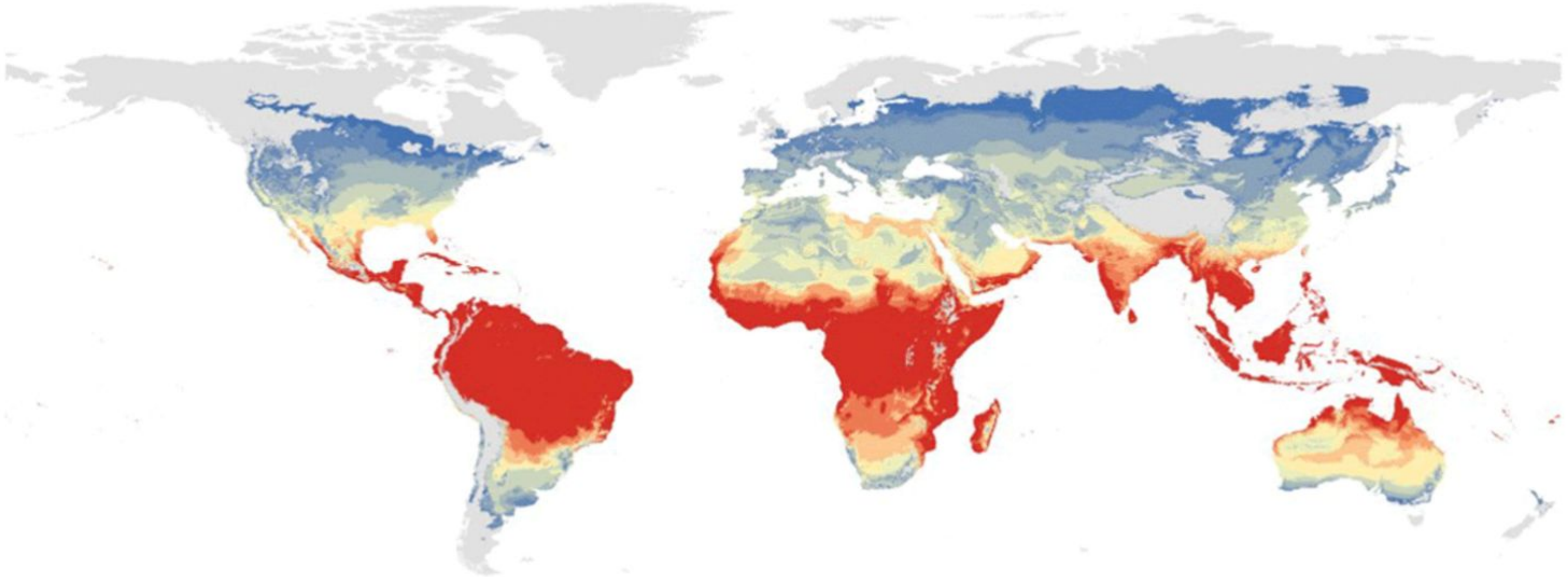
Number of months per year when disease transmission by *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is possible



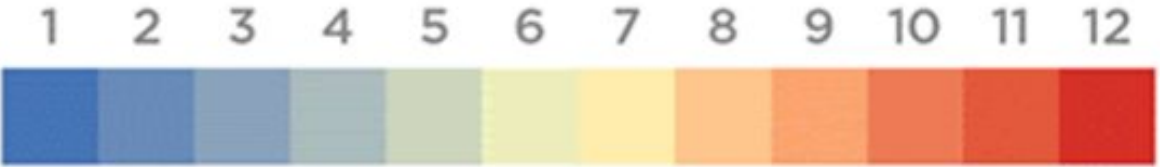
2050

Mosquito Habitat: Current & Projected

THIS PROJECTION IS BASED ON A WORST-CASE SCENARIO WITH THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE UNMITIGATED.



Number of months per year when disease transmission by *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is possible



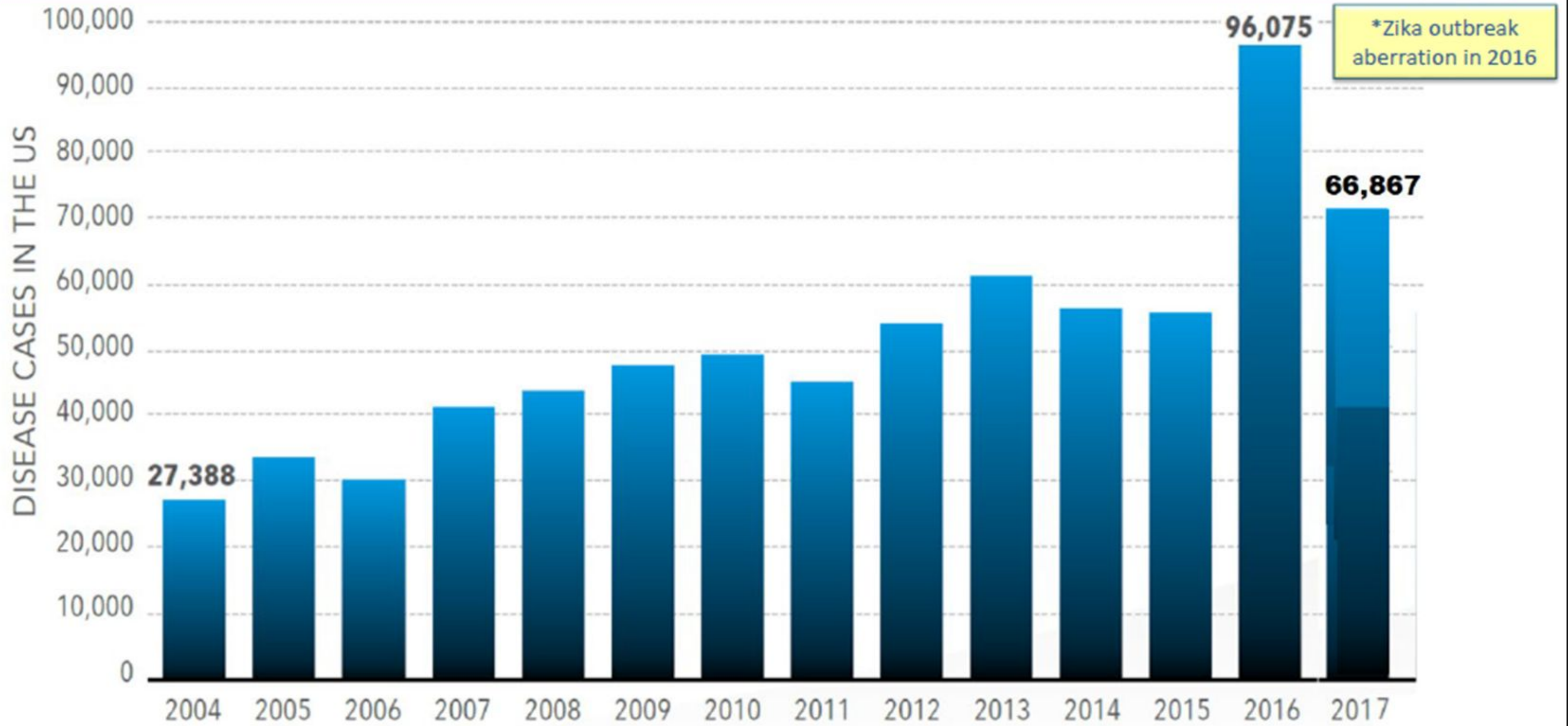
Vector-Borne Disease

- Vector-borne disease cases tripled in the US from 2004 to 2016.
- About 80% of vector control organizations lack critical prevention and control capabilities.

Malaria
Dengue
Lyme Disease
West Nile Virus
Schistosomiasis
Leishmaniasis

Chagas Disease
Yellow Fever
Zika
Eastern Equine
Encephalitis
Chikungunya

USA Disease Cases from Infected mosquitos, ticks, and fleas have more than doubled since 2004



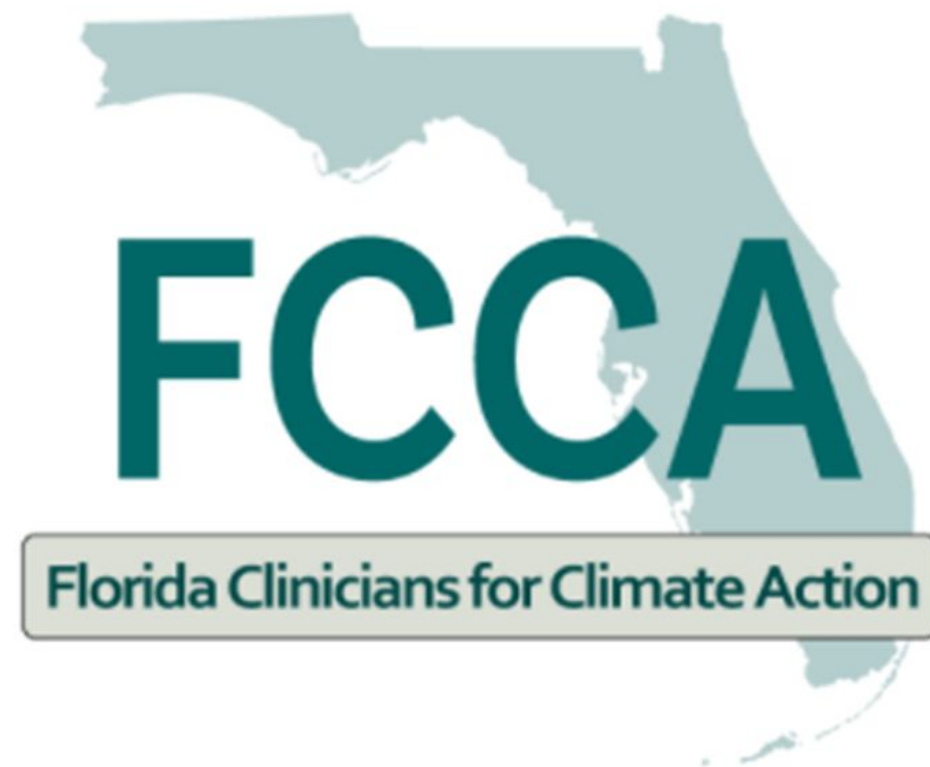
Credit: Updated from CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/vector-borne/infographic.html>

Poll Question

Are you currently addressing the health impacts of climate change through an MLP?

- Yes
- No - I have an MLP, but we are not directly addressing climate change
- No - I do not currently have an MLP

Thank you!



Protecting Climate-Vulnerable Patients via Advocacy Templates



IN HOUSING



IN EDUCATION



IN EMPLOYMENT

Advocacy Templates

- Document template to effectively assert and protect the legal rights of individual patients/families
- Can be easily accessed by health care staff and personalized on behalf of a patient
- Expand the capacity of an MLP to reach more patients
- Show nexus between requested accommodation/modification and health condition
- Create a paper trail and evidence that may come in handy at a later date
- DO NOT require the patient to be receiving/eligible for SSA disability
- Should be drafted in conjunction with legal provider
- Goal: To have templates as part of EHR and providers empowered to use them

Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications in Housing

- **Fair Housing Act** protects against discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), familial status, or **disability**
- A disabled person is defined as :
 - A person with a physical or mental impairment that **substantially limits one or more major life activities**; or
 - A person with a record of such an impairment; or
 - A person who is not disabled but is regarded as disabled.
- Accommodations: Changes to rules or services
- Modifications: Changes to the physical building

Accommodation: Early Termination of Lease Agreement

[MEDICAL PROVIDER LETTERHEAD]

[DATE]

[HOUSING PROVIDER/LANDLORD/PROPERTY MANAGER]
[ADDRESS]

Re: Reasonable Accommodation Request for [PATIENT NAME]
[ADDRESS]

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a (MEDICAL PROVIDER TYPE) at (MEDICAL OFFICE NAME AND LOCATION). [PATIENT NAME] is an established patient in my office. [He/she/they] request, as a reasonable accommodation, early termination of the lease agreement.

[PATIENT NAME] has disability as defined under the Federal Fair Housing Act. The rental unit located at [PATIENT'S ADDRESS] has the following conditions issues: [SELECT: leaks in roof, broken windows/doors, other*** explain]. [PATIENT NAME] has a medical condition and cannot be exposed to these conditions and/or environment because it exacerbates the symptoms of [PATIENT NAME]'s medical disability.

Per the Federal Fair Housing Act, it is unlawful discrimination to deny a person with a disability a reasonable accommodation related to rules, policies, and practices if such accommodation may be necessary to afford such person with an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. Please release [PATIENT NAME] from the lease agreement without penalty immediately to avoid any potential medical emergencies.

Please provide [PATIENT NAME] with written response to this request for a reasonable accommodation no later than [SELECT: five, ten] days from the date on this letter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to be in touch. I can be reached at [(xxx) xxx-xxxx].

Sincerely,

[Health Care Provider's signature]

Modification: Repair Air Conditioning

[MEDICAL PROVIDER LETTERHEAD]

[DATE]

Re: Reasonable Modification Request – Air Conditioning

Patient name|

Address

To whom it may concern,

I am a (MEDICAL PROVIDER TYPE) at (Medical Office Name and Location). [PATIENT NAME] is a patient in my office. [He/she/they] requests, as a reasonable accommodation, that the [SELECT: cooling agent: air conditioner/fan/other] in their dwelling be repaired as it was operational when their tenancy started. [PATIENT NAME] has a condition which constitutes a disability as defined under the Federal Fair Housing Act. [PATIENT'S NAME] cannot be exposed to heat exhaustion/overheating.

Per the Federal Fair Housing Act, it is unlawful discrimination to deny a person with a disability a reasonable accommodation related to rules, policies and practices if such accommodation may be necessary to afford such person with an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. Please repair the [air conditioning/fan/other cooling equipment] immediately to avoid any potential medical emergencies.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to be in touch. I can be reached at [HEALTH CARE PROVIDER'S CONTACT NUMBER].

Sincerely,

Health Care Provider's signature

Reasonable Accommodations in Education

- All children in grades K-12 are entitled to a free, appropriate public education.
- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** gives students who have a physical or mental impairment accommodations to “even the playing field.”
- Applies to all school-related events: instructional time, extracurriculars, fields trips
- Impairment defined as **substantially limiting one or more major life activities.**
- Accommodations:
 - Additional water breaks on class field trip
 - Access to shade at recess

Reasonable Accommodation in Education

[MEDICAL PROVIDER LETTERHEAD]

[DATE]

[SCHOOL NAME]

ATTN: Principal

[SCHOOL ADDRESS]

RE: [CHILD'S NAME], DOB [CHILD'S DATE OF BIRTH]

Child of [NAME OF PARTENT/S OR GUARDIAN/S]

[CHILD'S ADDRESS]

[PARENT/S OR GUARDIAN/S PHONE NUMBER]

Dear Principal,

I am a [HEALTH CARE PROVIDER: licensed pediatrician, physician, nurse practitioner, child psychologist, licensed clinical social worker, other*], at [clinic/hospital]. [Child's full name] is my patient.

I believe [child's first name] needs an evaluation for a Section 504 Service Plan because s/he has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits the major life activity(ies) of [this would be a dropdown menu in the EHR]

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Breathing | <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Communicating | <input type="checkbox"/> Seeing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing | <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Standing | <input type="checkbox"/> Eating | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring for oneself | <input type="checkbox"/> Concentrating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walking | <input type="checkbox"/> Thinking | <input type="checkbox"/> Bending | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working | | | |

Function of: Respiratory Neurological Immune System Endocrine

Renal Hematological

***Other [EXPLAIN]

[Child's first name] has the following relevant diagnosis(es):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

[Nexus between diagnoses and implications for learning]

I recommend the following accommodations and/or modifications for [child's first name]:

- additional water breaks when outdoors access to shade

Reasonable Accommodations in Employment

- The **Americans with Disabilities Act** (ADA) mandates reasonable accommodations for disabled employees and prohibits employers from retaliating against employees who request accommodations.
- A reasonable accommodation is any change to the application or hiring process, to the job, to the way the job is done, or the work environment that allows a person with a disability who is qualified for the job to perform the essential functions of that job and enjoy equal employment opportunities.
- Disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that **substantially limits one or more major life activities**.

Reasonable Accommodation in Employment

[LETTERHEAD]

** (PATIENT'S NAME)

** (PATIENT'S ADDRESS)

Dear Patient:

At your request, I am writing this letter and giving it to you in support of your employment reasonable accommodation request. You may choose to give it to your employer if you want to.

** (HEALTH CARE PROVIDER NAME)

** (DATE)

RE: REQUEST FOR REASONABLE ACCOMODATIONS for ** (PATIENT'S NAME)

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a **HEALTH CARE PROVIDER TYPE at the ABC Health Center's **Health Center LOCATION NAME, and ** (PATIENT'S NAME) is my patient. I confirm that (PATIENT'S NAME) has a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act that requires an accommodation.

Due to ** (PATIENT'S NAME)'s diagnosis, they have the following limitations [**MULTI-SELECT DROP DOWN]:

- Must wear protective clothing and/or mask;
- Must drink water regularly throughout the day;
- Must take breaks every [**how often] to eat a snack or [**explain];
- Require access to a cooling system (air conditioning, fan, shade);
- Requires access to the bathroom [**X times per **hour/s];
- Cannot stand for more than [**how long] without 15 minutes of sitting;
- Cannot lift more than **X pounds at a time;
- Cannot perform [***explain specific work duties];
- Must have an adjusted or modified work schedule to alleviate symptoms and/or attend medical appointments;
- Cannot be exposed to certain hazards, including **[specific toxins];
- Must take medication that needs to be stored in a refrigerator or cooler;
- Other [**explain]

Resources

- **Medical Society Consortium On Climate And Health**
www.medsocietiesforclimatehealth.org
- **Florida Clinicians For Climate Action** www.floridaclinicians.org
- **Miami Dade County Extreme Heat Toolkit**
<https://miamifoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/extreme-heat-toolkit.pdf>
- **Public Health Institute's Center For Climate Change And Health • A Framework For Action**
<https://www.phi.org/thought-leadership/climate-change-and-health-a-framework-for-action/>

Thank you!

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**Please submit questions using
the Q&A function.**

Moderated by:

Katie Hathaway, JD

National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership

Thank you!

Please take a moment to complete our survey!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PJ29JT8>



A link to the survey is also in the chat.

Happening Soon. RSVP Now!

National Center for Medical Legal Partnership
AT THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

HEALTH PARTNERS
ON IPV + EXPLOITATION

MLP IN ACTION
WEBINAR SERIES

January 23, 2024
3 - 4 PM ET

HEALTH CENTER EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS FOR SURVIVORS
OF IPV + EXPLOITATION:
**MULTIDISCIPLINARY
COLLABORATIONS
TO ADDRESS
LEGAL NEEDS**



The Social Determinants
of Health Academy

SDOH ACADEMY LEARNING SERIES:

**BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN
HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS AND
COMMUNITY-BASED
ORGANIZATIONS TO ADDRESS
HEALTH DISPARITIES**

THURSDAY, FEB. 1, 2024

3:00PM - 4:30PM ET

REGISTER AT [HTTPS://BIT.LY/SDOH-BUILDING-0201](https://bit.ly/sdoH-building-0201)

PART THREE OF A FOUR-PART NATIONAL
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Register here:

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