

Building Safer, Healthier Communities

Climate and
Health Advocates
in Coalition

JULY 21ST | 2:00PM ET



Introduction

Kristen Soares



State Climate Policy
Network Manager

CLIMATE **X** CHANGE
[SCPN]

State Climate Policy Network



Network of **15,000+**

- State and local elected officials
- NGO advocates
- Researchers
- State agency staffers
- Organizers and activists
- Business leaders

... working on state climate policy

www.climate-xchange.org/network

Pro Bono Policy Assistance

We specialize in state climate policy design and analysis.
Reach out to kristen@climate-xchange.org with your requests on:

- **Example states** and **model rules** for a given policy
- **Gap analysis** of your state's climate policy landscape
- **Connections** to other actors working on similar issues

Building Safer, Healthier Communities: *Climate and Health Advocates in Coalition*



Shweta Arya

Senior Project Manager

*Center for Climate, Health &
Equity, American Public
Health Association*



Tim Cronin

Associate Director of Policy &
Advocacy

*Health Care Without Harm &
Practice Greenhealth*

Agenda

1. Climate, Public Health, and Equity
2. Mobilizing Healthcare Actors
3. Q&A

Speaker

Shweta Arya



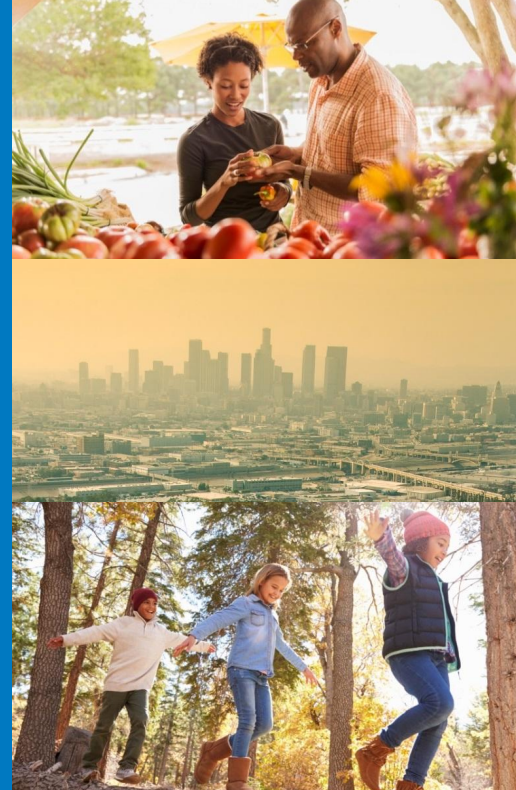
**Senior Project Manager
for Smart Surfaces**

Center for Climate, Health & Equity,
American Public Health Association

Mobilizing Public Health for State Climate Policy:

Lessons from the Field

July 21, 2026
Climate XChange



About APHA

The American Public Health Association serves as a convenor, catalyst and advocate to build capacity in the public health community. We champion optimal, equitable health and well-being for all. We promote best practices and share the latest public health research and information. With our broad-based member community and 150-year perspective, we influence federal policy to improve the public's health. Learn more at www.apha.org.



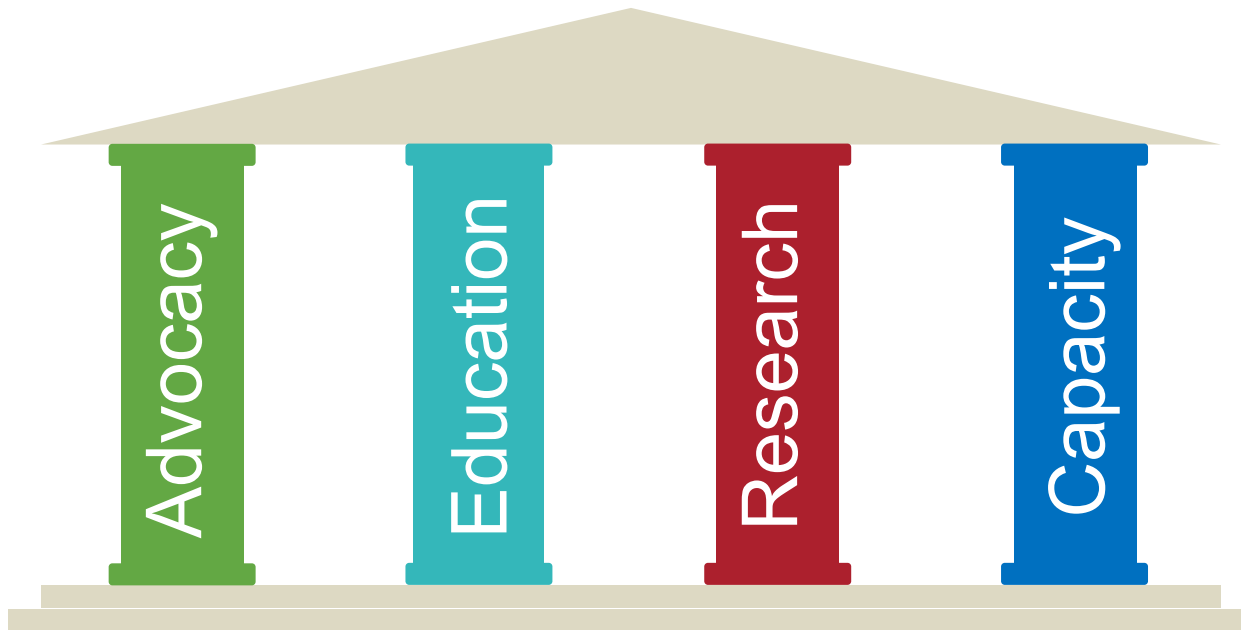
AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

For science. For action. For health.

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APHA's Center for Climate, Health and Equity

Strategy Pillars



The health sector is a critical voice in climate advocacy

And health voice is often missing in climate organizing and climate policy



69% of Americans **trust health professionals** as a source of information about climate change



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
Community Health Centers®

ecoAmerica
everyone. every day.

Issue-Based Advocacy: Bringing Health to Climate Campaigns

Explore at [APHA.org/Extreme-Heat](https://www.apha.org/Extreme-Heat)



From Tobacco to Fossil Fuels: Health Leading the Fight

- The **health sector once faced skepticism** when it linked tobacco to disease—yet **APHA and health allies** led the fight for prevention measures and regulation.
- That movement showed how **health evidence + trusted messengers** can shift public opinion and policy against a powerful industry.
- Today, **fossil fuels are a major driver of climate change and health harms**, from extraction to combustion.

Explore at [APHA.org/Extreme-Heat](https://www.apha.org/Extreme-Heat)



A collaborative report on the direct health impacts of fossil fuel pollution across every system of the body and every stage of fossil fuel use.



Full Report



Fact Sheet

“Fueling Sickness: The Hidden Health Costs of Fossil Fuel Pollution” was developed by health and medical experts, and is endorsed by 12 national health organizations, including Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, American Public Health Association, Children’s Environmental Health Network, Climate Psychiatry Alliance, Climate Psychology Alliance North America, The International Society for Environmental Epidemiology North America Chapter, The Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health, Medical Student for a Sustainable Future, the National Medical Association, Oncology Advocates United for Climate and Health, and the Public Health Institute. This report highlights how fossil fuel pollution is affecting the health of all Americans, here and now.



Fueling Sicknes:

The Hidden Health Costs of Fossil Fuel Pollution



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Urban Heat Islands: Why Cities Are Hotter—and Who Pays the Price

- Urban Heat Islands (UHIs): Cities are hotter due to dark surfaces, lack of vegetation, and dense infrastructure.
- 80% US population lives in the cities
- Disproportionate impact on low-income and historically marginalized communities.



Make Polluters Pay: Protecting Health and Accountability

- **Immunity shield bills:** Federal and state proposals (e.g., UT; bills in TN, IA, LA, OK) would grant fossil fuel companies **immunity from climate liability**.
- **Health burden shifted:** These laws move the costs of **flooding, heat, and air pollution** from polluters onto **families and health systems**.
- **Polluter Pays principle:** Big oil and gas must pay for the **health and climate damages** they cause—not communities.
- **APHA's role:** On the steering committee of the **Public Health for Community Power Coalition**, supporting **Make Polluters Pay** and opposing immunity bills.
- **Resource:** June 23 webinar, “**Making Polluters Pay**,” outlines the health case for climate accountability.
[APHA.org/act-on-climate](https://www.apha.org/act-on-climate)



The Smart Surfaces Coalition is made up of more than 40 leading national and international organizations with a shared commitment to creating **cooler**, **healthier**, and **more resilient** cities by cost-effectively reducing the impacts of extreme urban heat and flooding.

Learn more at [APHA.org/Smart-Surfaces](https://www.apha.org/smart-surfaces)

Cities for Smart Surfaces Project

- No cost to cities
- A three-year program(till 2026)
- APHA funded 6 State Affiliates
- Is focused on transforming dark, impervious surfaces to light, porous surfaces
- Combat extreme heat and stormwater flooding in urban areas



Learn more at [APHA.org/Smart-Surfaces](https://www.apha.org/smart-surfaces)



APHA's Affiliates Work



BUILD LOCAL,
CROSS-DISCIPLINARY
PARTNERSHIPS



ENGAGE AND EDUCATE
COMMUNITIES ON SMART
SURFACES



PROMOTE PUBLIC HEALTH
MESSAGING TO GUIDE
CITY-WIDE CLIMATE POLICY

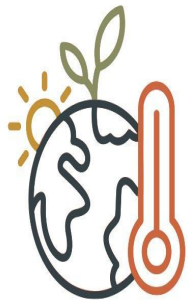
Cities for Smart Surfaces Project

Learn more: [APHA.org/smart-surfaces](https://www.apha.org/smart-surfaces)



- APHA is supporting six Affiliates to engage their city of focus.
- Florida (Jacksonville)
- Georgia (Atlanta)
- Louisiana (New Orleans)
- South Carolina (Columbia)
- North Carolina (Charlotte)
- Oregon (Portland)

SSC is partnering with 10 cities across the US to facilitate the adoption of Smart Surfaces at the metropolitan level and working with communities in those regions to support community-led, local Smart Surface implementation projects.



Alliance for Heat Resilience and Health

Addressing the health harms of extreme heat.

- Over a dozen national health partners
- Launched in 2024
800 Comments in support of OSHA
- Governor's letter signed by 130 orgs delivered NGA
- National Heat Safety Week
Campaign in partnership with NIHHS and NOAA





Extreme Heat Resource Hub
Explore at [APHA.org/Extreme-Heat](https://www.apha.gov/Extreme-Heat)
More info on group model training: Shweta Arya-
Shweta.Arya@apha.org

Data Centers and Public Health: An Emerging Climate–Health Threat

- Estimates suggest data centers could contribute to **~600,000 asthma cases and 1,300 deaths per year by 2030** due to degraded air quality.
- Without rapid decarbonization, **data center–related emissions are projected to more than double by 2030**, worsening climate and air pollution.
- About **57% of cooling water comes from potable sources**, straining local supplies and competing with community needs.
- Communities within **one mile of data centers** are disproportionately **communities of color** and face **PM_{2.5} and NO₂ levels above the national median**.
- **Pregnant women, infants, and children** face elevated risks, as developing systems are more susceptible to **toxins and chronic noise** from data center operations.



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APHA's emerging work:

- Convened a multi-sector roundtable on data centers and public health
- Partnering on a Data Center webinar series to provide health evidence and messaging tools for state and local advocates

A poster for a new webinar series. The background is a dark, semi-transparent overlay on a photograph of a large data center building at night. The text is in white and yellow. At the top, it says 'NEW WEBINAR SERIES' in yellow. Below that, the title 'Data Centers and Health: Understanding the Impacts and Taking Action' is in white. The dates 'August 5 - September 16, 2026' and time '2 PM ET // 11 AM PT' are listed. A dotted line separates this from a quote: 'The data center boom is reshaping our communities. Learn how to respond through this four-part series.' At the bottom, there are logos for several organizations: The Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health, PSR (Physicians for Social Responsibility), Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, APHA (American Public Health Association), and Healthy Climate Wisconsin.

NEW WEBINAR SERIES

**Data Centers and Health:
Understanding the
Impacts and Taking Action**

August 5 - September 16, 2026
2 PM ET // 11 AM PT

.....

*The data center boom is reshaping
our communities. Learn how to
respond through this four-part series.*

The Medical Society Consortium on
CLIMATE & HEALTH

PSR PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Alliance of Nurses for
Healthy Environments

APHA AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
For science. For action. For health.

HEALTHY CLIMATE WISCONSIN
Wisconsin Health Professionals for Climate Action

Key Takeaways — Bring Health to the Climate Table

- **Health is the missing, trusted voice** in many climate coalitions—yet it's one of the most effective frames for building broad, bipartisan support.
- **Health professionals rank among the most trusted messengers** on climate; partner with nurses, doctors, and public health experts in your state.
- **Focus on health benefits of climate solutions** (cleaner air, cooler homes, safer communities) to motivate action across audiences.
- **APHA and health partners are ready allies:** from fossil fuel policy to heat resilience and data centers, we offer research, messengers, and campaign support.
- **Call to action:** If your coalition isn't already working with health allies, reach out this week—identify one health partner to join your next strategy meeting.



Thank you!

Shweta Arya (she/her)

Sr. Project Manager

Center for Climate, Health and Equity

Shweta.Arya@apha.org



CCHE Newsletter Sign Up

Speaker

Tim Cronin



Associate Director of Policy & Advocacy

Health Care Without Harm & Practice

Greenhealth



Hospitals in State Climate Policy: Three roles health systems can play

Tim Cronin, Health Care Without Harm

July 21st, 2026 presentation to the State Climate Policy Network (SCPN)

Hospitals bring more than a health message

01

Make impacts tangible

Connect climate hazards to patients, workers, care delivery, and community conditions

02

Improve policy design

Bring practical knowledge about buildings, data, reliability, and implementation

03

Validate and advocate

Frame climate action as health, affordability, reliability, and community protection

Not simply another group of endorsers, but **partners in climate policy**

Climate impacts show up in care delivery



Patients

Heat illness, smoke exposure, injuries

Workforce

Staffing and transportation disruptions

Operations

Power, supplies, facilities, continuity

Community

Safe discharge and home medical needs

Operational knowledge makes policy implementable

Hospitals operate continuously - and cannot pause patient care while systems change

- ✓ Safety and infection control
- ✓ Reliability and emergency power
- ✓ Capital cycles and occupied facilities
- ✓ Data, reporting, and verification



Policy improves when hospitals help shape implementation

01 **MassHealth**

**Hospital emissions
reporting**

Use health-sector authority to
build climate accountability

02 **Boston
BERDO**

**Building emissions
standards**

Move the conversation from
whether to how

03 **Southern
California**

**Boiler and air-quality
rules**

Pair pollution reduction with
realistic sequencing

Hospitals can strengthen both the case for action and the policy itself

Hospitals already advocate—but often in different policy lanes



Translation works in both directions

A discrete energy ask may face fewer internal conflicts than another request before a health committee

Hospitals make grid policy concrete

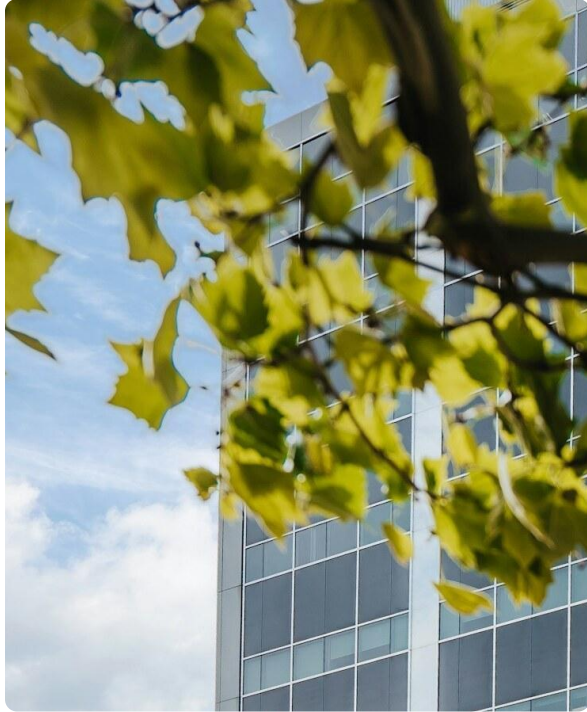


A hospital does not need to be an energy-policy expert, to speak to the...

- 01** — Consequences of outages
- 02** — Limits of backup generation
- 03** — Exposure to energy and fuel costs
- 04** — Need for long-term planning

It can speak as a sophisticated customer and essential service provider

There is no single hospital perspective



Different institutions

Rural or critical-access

Public safety-net

Academic medical center

Large multi state system

Different internal roles

Sustainability

Facilities

Clinicians

Community health

Government affairs

Executives and legal

**Who holds the expertise? The relationships?
The authority?**

Public testimony is one of many options for hospitals

Learn

Advise

Participate

Support

Lead



Receive
context

Technical
feedback

Working group
or meeting

Letter or
private
outreach

Testify or
co-advocate

A PRACTICAL PLACE TO START:

Ask four questions to ask hospitals

1 What are you experiencing?

2 What matters to your institution?

3 What would make the policy workable?

4 What role are you positioned to play?



Thank you!

Tim Cronin, Health Care Without Harm
tcronin@hcwh.org

Q&A

Thank you for joining!

**Reach out to
kristen@climate-xchange.org with any
additional questions!**

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