

NHMS Policy Position

Subject: Engagement of New Hampshire Physicians in Addressing Climate Change

Whereas, compelling scientific evidence indicates that human activities, chiefly the burning of fossil fuels, are driving climate change, and

Whereas, climate change is impacting human health, safety, and well-being through increasing life-threatening weather-related events including: heat waves, heavy precipitation, fires, floods, and increasing frequency and severity of storm activity, and

Whereas, changing ecosystems are driving numerous and diverse human health problems, including worsening asthma, allergies and respiratory diseases; increased range and prevalence of vector-mediated infectious diseases; famine and water supply shortages; heatstroke; and stress-related mental health challenges, and

Whereas, changing environmental conditions threaten many human communities across the world including land erosion, drought, and rising sea levels.

Whereas, climate change disproportionately affects the health of vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and persons under economic stress

Whereas, actions that can successfully slow the current course of climate change and its impact on human health are possible, and

Whereas, physicians are potentially influential members of their communities and have requisite scientific training to understand the physical forces driving climate change, and a professional obligation to work to preserve the health, safety, and well-being of their patients.

Resolved, that the New Hampshire Medical Society urges its members to:

1. Inform themselves of the scientific facts of climate change.
2. Embrace opportunities to educate community members, legislators, and their patients about the realities of climate change, its impact on individual and public health, and its potential solutions.
3. Act to reduce the impact of climate change through personal actions that:
 - a) Support sustainable energy and environmental practices.
 - b) Reduce carbon emissions and other factors contributing to climate change.
 - c) Reduce support for entities that contribute significantly to climate change.
4. Engage in advocacy and leadership to
 - a) Reduce carbon emissions and increase sustainable energy and environmental practices.
 - b) Better address the individual and public health impacts of climate change.
5. Advocate for research to inform evidence-based policy and actions to address climate change and its impacts on human health.

Adopted by NHMS Council on December 8, 2021