



Communities, Climate Change, and Health Equity – A New Vision

**A Virtual Workshop Series from the
Environmental Health Matters Initiative**

October 12 from 11:00 AM–4:00 PM (ET)

and

October 14 from 12:00–4:00 PM (ET)

The National Academies of
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE



Environmental Health

Presented by Martha Rudolph

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Focus of Environmental Health

“More than 12 million people around the world die every year because they live or work in unhealthy environments. Healthy People 2030 focuses on reducing people’s exposure to **harmful pollutants in air, water, soil, food, and materials in homes and workplaces.**”

- **Healthy People 2030 U.S Health and Human Services.**
- Broad definition but focus on chemical releases
- Traditionally controlled by environmental laws: SDWA, CAA, CWA, TSCA, RCRA , CERCLA
- Based on standards intended to protect environment and human health
 - At point of use
 - Individual not cumulative

Recognition of Broad Environmental Health Impacts

Environmental Health is more than just impacts from exposures to harmful pollutants emitted and discharged into our air, water and soils

“Healthier environments could prevent almost one quarter of the global burden of disease. The COVID-19 pandemic is a further reminder of the delicate relationship between people and our planet.

Clean air, **stable climate**, adequate water, sanitation and hygiene, safe use of chemicals, protection from radiation, healthy and safe workplaces, **sound agricultural practices, health-supportive cities and built environments, and a preserved nature** are all prerequisites for good health.”

- **World Health Organization**

Natural Environment Impacts on Health

Beneficial

- Green Space
- Trees
- Parks
- Sun/Sky
- Water/Rivers
- Wildlife
- Physical
- Experiencing Nature

Harmful

- Floods
- Drought
- Wildfires
- Storms
- Hurricanes/tornados/wind
- Ice/snow
- Rain
- Heat

Built Environment Impacts on Health

- Zoning and land use decisions
- Building design
- Green space – trees, parks, playgrounds
- Hardscape – run-off, flooding, heat, sun
- Transportation –safety, noise, air emissions
- Access to work, food, school, shopping
- Physical



Environmental Health

**Not just what we are putting into the environment but
how we are changing our environment**

Climate Change

- Environmental Health Impacts from Climate Change
 - Increase in number and intensity of natural environment impacts
 - Increase in damage to built and natural environments
 - Increase in cumulative impacts to the health of our communities

“I have long understood that climate change is not only an environmental issue – it is a humanitarian, economic, health, and justice issue as well.”

Frances Beinecke, former President of the NRDC and environmental activist