

# Establishing the Hawai'i Working Group on Climate Change and Health: Encouraging public health focus on the impacts of climate change through intersectoral collaboration, key partnerships and greater community involvement

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## Hawai'i Climate Change and Health Initiative: 2013-2015

- In 2013, HPHA's Board began discussing the public health response to climate change and its impacts on health
- In 2014, HPHA applied for and received a \$10,000 grant from APHA, to establish and implement a public policy project, called **Health in All Policies (HIAP)**
- Our overall aim was to address the social determinants of health by focusing on climate change and its consequences on health outcomes, through adoption of new state policy
- Following an HPHA Climate Change and Health survey of HPHA membership (August-Sept. 2014), an October 2014 Stakeholders Briefing was held at the State Capitol, where survey information and other climate change and health presentations were shared

## HPHA Climate Change and Health Survey

### Key Findings *Climate Change IS a Public Health Issue*

- Approximately **58%** of public health professionals responding were "very concerned" about the potential impacts of Climate Change on health on Hawai'i residents or felt that it was the number one health issue today
- Just over **29%** were "somewhat concerned"
- Approximately **66%** felt that the impacts of Climate Change on health in Hawai'i received "little to no attention"
- Less than **6%** felt that the impacts of Climate Change on Health have received "a lot or too much attention"

*In terms of human health consequences, the key Climate Change and Health risks for Hawai'i (based on IPCC risk factors) were identified by HPHA members to be:*

- Asthma, Respiratory Allergies and Airway Diseases
- Foodborne Diseases and Nutrition
- Heat-Related Morbidity and Mortality
- Cancer

### Conclusions

- Current perceptions of Climate Change and Health factors appear to be based on personal knowledge, rather than a more coordinated public health response
- Public Health needs to discuss these emerging/perceived threats to determine a coordinated effective response to Climate Change and Health
- Public health professionals appear to be ready to do their part, if provided the education, skills and resources

## ALOHA! For More Information:

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## The Hawai'i Public Health Association

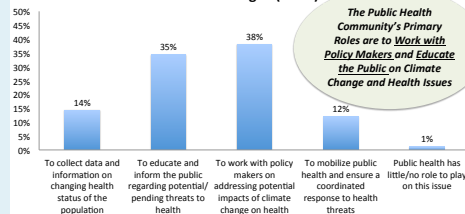
HPHA is an affiliate of the APHA and an association of community members, public health professionals and organizations dedicated to improving public health. HPHA represents a membership of over 650 practitioners, professionals, and students in the field of public health statewide. HPHA also serves as a voice for public health professionals and as a repository for information about public health in the Pacific.

**HPHA strives to promote health equity and overall well-being in Hawai'i by:**

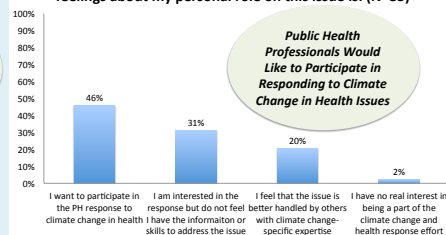
- providing leadership and education on public health issues
- promoting advocacy and supporting coalitions for healthy communities, populations and environments
- fostering networks and training opportunities for public health professionals



### What do you see as the PRIMARY ROLE of the public health community in addressing health-related effects of climate change? (N=84)



### In terms of climate change and its health impacts, my feelings about my personal role on this issue is: (N=83)

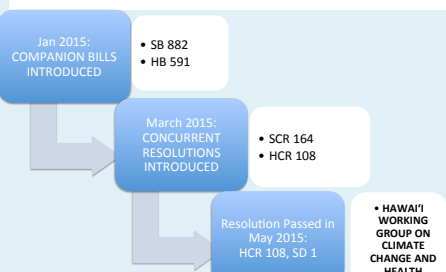


## Hawai'i Legislative and Policy Advocacy Climate Change and Health: Spring 2015

- Following an HPHA-organized briefing on climate change and health held at the State Capitol on October 23, 2014, the decision was made to work with key state legislators to introduce a climate change and health bill (HB 591 and SB 882).
- During initial hearings on the 2 bills, resistance emerged that focused on HB 591 proposing to amend the Hawai'i Climate Adaptation Initiative Act 83, Session Laws of Hawai'i, 2014.
- The stated purpose of Act 83 was to address the effects of climate change to protect the State's economy, health, environment, and way of life.
- Act 83 established an interagency climate adaptation committee within the State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR).
- The proposed Act 83 climate change and natural would first and foremost focus on and develop sea level rise vulnerability and adaptation reports. DLNR opposed revisiting this intent.
- HPHA negotiated a new approach to establishing climate change and health as a resolution rather than a bill

## HPHAs Role in HCR 108

- Drafted and edited companion bills SB 882 and HB 591 relating to the establishment of a Climate Change and Health Working Group
- Wrote concurrent resolutions SCR 164 and HCR 108 relating to the establishment of a Climate Change and Health Working Group (no funding)
- Collaborated with other public and private sector organizations to testify in support of the bills and resolutions
- Provided lead testimony at House and Senate Health and Environment hearings related to the bills and resolutions



## Implementation of House Concurrent Resolution HCR 108, SD1

*"Requested the convening of a Hawai'i Climate Change and Health Working Group by the Dept. of Health to assess the scope of risks of climate change on the health of Hawai'i's residents and to develop a strategic plan to address climate change risks to health statewide"*

## Hawai'i Climate Change and Health Working Group Goals

### Working Group Deliverables

- Produce preliminary report and recommendations to the Department of Health (DOH), which DOH transmits to the 2016 Legislature
- Identify key issues to address first and potential resources (e.g. CDC's BRACE Initiative)
- Identify potential partners to accomplish goals

### Long-term Objectives

- Establish DOH position to address climate change and health coordination within the DOH and the Public Health workforce
- Seek resources to support adaptation efforts
- Train and educate public health workforce and community on adapting to climate change while addressing evolving health-related issues

## Working Group Updates

Working Group members (15) identified and invited in June 2015  
First monthly meeting held in August 2015  
Working Group co-chaired by DOH and HPHA

### Meeting agendas to date include:

- Meeting 1: Aug 20, 2015:** Focus: Introduction to WG; overview of HCR108, SD1 and HCCWG purpose; Climate Change Hawai'i activities; Developing, improving, integrating and maintaining state and regional disease surveillance systems and monitoring capacity to respond to health-related effects of climate change
- Meeting 2: Sept. 17, 2015:** Focus: Water security, food safety, and vector-borne infectious diseases
- Meeting 3: Oct. 15, 2015:** Focus: Respiratory and pulmonary effects, including responses to air allergens; The health effects of air pollution, including heightened sensitivity to air pollution; Brief overview of the implications of climate change for the world and Hawai'i; The need for action on climate change starting yesterday
- Meeting 4: Nov. 19, 2015:** Focus: Cardiovascular effects, including impacts of temperature extremes; Mental and behavioral health impacts of climate change in the health of displaced persons and at-risk populations and communities; CDC BRACE resources on climate adaptation

## Hawai'i Climate Change and Health Initiative: Lessons Learned to Date

- Involve your Affiliate membership in the issue
- Use APHA Climate Change and Health resources
- Invite all interested state and community organizations to the table
- Include college students/future leaders in the process
- Revisit goals frequently
- Seek partners for research and information sharing
- Provide start-up support for development and implementation, even if it is an unfunded venture