

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS THROUGH THE PERSPECTIVE OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES

EMI CHUTARO, MSC
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PACIFIC ISLAND HEALTH OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
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DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Who we are
2. What we do
3. Where we work
4. Climate change impact and health disparities – a personal journey
5. Mitigating climate change impact – health in all policies

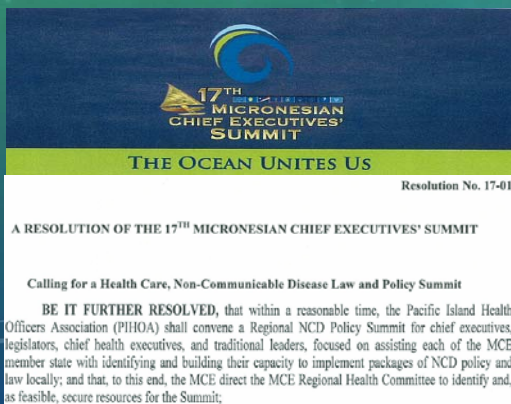
WHO WE ARE

- Established in 1986 by Pacific health officials as a non-profit 501(c)3 chartered in the CNMI and the State of Hawaii
- Regional voice for the six US-affiliated Pacific islands (USAPIs)
 - ❖ US Territories of American Samoa and Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)
 - ❖ US Freely Associated States of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republics of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and Palau
- 3 offices – Honolulu (HQ), Guam and Palau
- Currently host 2 CDC Immunization Public Health Advisors, a CDC Chronic Disease Epidemiologist, and a CDC Preparedness Career Epidemiology Field Officer at PIHOA Guam Office – work across all six USAPIs
- Secretariat for the Regional Health Committee of the Micronesian Chief Executives (MCES) and recently appointed by the Pacific Heads and Ministers of Health as the third technical health agency partner to work alongside the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)



WHAT WE DO – HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

- ✓ Ancillary and Support Services
- ✓ Health Information Management Systems (HIMS)
- ✓ Health Systems Performance Improvement
- ✓ Human Resources for Health (HRH)
- ✓ Strategic Engagement
- ✓ Planning and Policy Development





GEOGRAPHIC VULNERABILITY

- Mix of volcanic islands, low-lying islands and atolls spread across 5 time zones
- Low-lying islands and atolls most at immediate risk of rising sea levels, coastal erosion, reef die-off, access to safe water and salt water intrusion



GEOGRAPHIC ISOLATION

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE – MY HOME



KING TIDES

- Combination of high tides and full moon – compounded by sea-level rise
- Event becoming much more frequent and more damaging as time goes on
- Salt water intrusion into the fresh water lens and low lying areas
- Damage to property and crops



- Where my sister-in-law works (top left)
- Where my elementary school is (bottom left)
- Gravesite near town (top right)

COMPOUNDING EXISTING DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES



DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



- **Safe Shelter** – Damage to and loss of homes; urban crowding
- **Health and Education** – Damage to schools, clinics, hospitals, etc.
- **Income Generation and Economic Development** – Damage to and loss of businesses, agricultural and aqua-culture development impact
- **Culture and Social Safety Nets** – Climate change refugees; migration from rural areas to urban centers (urban crowding)
- **Environmental Health** – safe water access, coastal integrity, and sanitation; increased vulnerability to natural disasters; coral bleaching
- **Food Safety and Nutrition** – access to local food and produce; reduction in fishing stocks



For us in the islands:

- Climate change is not only about reducing carbon emissions, going green, or recycling our household waste;
- It is about human, socio-economic, and environmental **survival**;
- HiAP approaches help to identify, resource and implement sustainable and context-appropriate interventions to address health disparities and **build resiliency**, including strengthening health systems and capabilities to better respond to climate change impacts to health and well-being.



Prediction is that **within 50-70 years**, sea level rise will be such that many of the islands will no longer be habitable; some island nations like Tuvalu and Kiribati have already established 40-Year Exodus Plans:

- Support is needed in the islands for immediate, intermediate and long-term climate change and health mitigation planning and response;
- Need for policies, legislation and investment to strengthen social, human and environmental resiliency to enable continued human survival in the islands – innovative technologies? Alternate practices for food production? Innovative solutions to urban planning in small islands?
- Continue to lobby in the global arena to gain attention of the developed world to change current practices that compound climate change impact; support investments in reducing socio-economic and health impacts of climate change migration and preserve diverse cultural heritage.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

KOMMOL TATA