

Adverse Effects of Climate Change on Children's Health

Position Statement

Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

The Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) recognizes the threat to children and adolescents posed by global climate change. In November 2015, our national organization, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), published a Policy Statement, *Global Climate Change and Children's Health*, which discusses the unique vulnerability of children to the adverse health effects of climate change and the potentially devastating effects on the well-being of children and adolescents:

*"The effects of climate change on child health include: physical and psychological sequelae of weather disasters; increased heat stress; decreased air quality; altered disease patterns of some climate-sensitive infections; and food, water, and nutrient security in vulnerable regions. The social foundations of children's mental and physical health are threatened by the specter of far-reaching effects of unchecked climate change, including community and global instability, mass migrations, and increased conflict. Given this knowledge, failure to take prompt, substantive action would be an act of injustice to all children. A paradigm shift in production and consumption of energy is both a necessity and an opportunity for major innovation, job creation, and significant, immediate associated health benefits."*¹

Because of the anticipated benefits to child and adolescent health resulting from a reduction in the processes that contribute to climate change, MDAAP supports efforts by the State of Maryland to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to address health inequities that disproportionately affect certain communities, particularly communities of color, overburdened by the effects of climate change. MDAAP also recognizes the need for urgent action and welcomes the opportunity to share its expertise in discussions of proposed climate legislation and the potential impact on children's health.

Reference:

¹ Adhoot, S and the Council on Environmental Health. Global Climate Change and Children's Health: Policy Statement. *Pediatrics*. 2015; 136(5): 992-997