



As Nations Gather to Discuss Climate Change, PHI Urges Collaboration and Greater Attention to Health

As nations gather for the 17th annual Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) this week and next in Durban, South Africa, PHI urges continued global collaboration to address this pressing issue, and calls for greater and more meaningful attention to the impacts of climate change on human health.

“Climate change has major implications for human health and well being around the globe, often hitting the most vulnerable populations, such as women and children in the poorest regions in the world, the hardest.” states Cristina Tirado, DVM, MS, PhD, director of PHI’s Center for Public Health and Climate Change. Impacts on health include increased injuries, illnesses and deaths from extreme weather events; cardio-respiratory illnesses due to changes in air quality; under-nutrition due to food and nutrition insecurity; and changing trends in vectorborne, foodborne and waterborne diseases, among others.

Tirado, who is representing PHI in Durban, emphasizes that “policies and investments to adapt to and mitigate climate change have great potential to improve health while also bringing co-benefits to other sectors. Health implications should be addressed by the UNFCCC.”

While human health has been acknowledged as a key motivator for addressing climate change, it is not effectively built into the UN’s funding paths, committees or programs. This must change, says PHI president and CEO Mary Pittman, DrPH.

“The World Health Organization has identified [key mechanisms](#) for translating recognition of the health impacts of climate change into action,” notes Pittman. “PHI fully endorses WHO’s recommendations to incorporate health considerations into climate change-related funding, tracking, and programming.”

While in Durban, PHI’s Center for Public Health and Climate Change will be launching a [paper on women’s leadership to address the challenges of climate change on health and nutrition](#), at a high level event co-sponsored by the World Food Programme, the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition, and Action Against Hunger.

[Learn more about PHI’s activities at COP17.](#)

About the Public Health Institute

The [Public Health Institute](#), an independent nonprofit organization based in Oakland, California, is dedicated to promoting health, well-being and quality of life for people throughout California, across the nation and around the world. PHI’s primary methods for achieving these goals include: sharing evidence developed through program interventions, quality research and evaluation; conducting public policy analysis and advocacy, providing training and technical assistance; and promoting successful prevention strategies to policymakers, communities and individuals.

About the Center for Public Health and Climate Change

PHI's [Center for Public Health and Climate Change](#) contributes to building healthy and climate-resilient communities that have the right tools to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The Center engages local leaders, scientists, policymakers, health care providers and civil society in mainstreaming the protection of health across a wide range of policies and sectors. It promotes strategies that effectively address the impacts of climate on health and nutrition, while at the same time generating co-benefits from adaptation and mitigation in the health, agriculture, transport, housing and energy sectors.

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