



Photo: Mikael Colville-Andersen

# Environmental Health

The Public Health Institute is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting health, well-being and quality of life throughout California, across the nation and around the world.

Our environment—the air we breathe, the food we consume and the climate around us—profoundly impacts our health. Communities of color and low-income populations are disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards and the impacts of climate change.

PHI is in the vanguard of improving health and equity by addressing some of the most pressing environmental issues of our time.

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## Our Approach

**We undertake groundbreaking studies. We show how the built environment can influence whether or not an individual will develop asthma, cancer and other illnesses. We educate the public and policy makers about the impacts of climate change on public health, and more.**



Advocate for policies and regulations that create cleaner environments and better health, and that mitigate the effects of climate change



Research exposure to environmental toxins—making connections to diseases like cancer—to track health threats and predict future ones



Communicate with the public and policymakers about the impacts of environmental hazards and climate change on human health



Partner with local community organizations, physicians and others to draw attention to problems and work toward solutions

## Our Priority



### Building Health Equity

A study by PHI's California Environmental Health Tracking Program found that Hispanic children in California were nearly twice as likely as White children to attend public schools with the highest nearby use of harmful agricultural pesticides. Their research spurred new California legislation limiting the application of pesticides near schools.



Research by PHI's Child Health and Development Studies demonstrated that women exposed to the pesticide DDT in the womb were nearly **4 times more likely** to be diagnosed with breast cancer as adults—an important finding as DDT, although now banned in the U.S., is still used in many countries worldwide.

## Our Work

**Empowering Physicians to Speak Out on Climate Change** — Recognizing that physicians are trusted voices on issues of health and wellness, PHI's Center for Climate Change and Health **trains doctors and other health professionals** to address the connections between climate change and health, and developed resources including a poster series on the health impacts of climate change and *A Physician's Guide to Climate Change, Health and Equity*.

**Advocating for Cleaner Air and Better Health** — PHI's Regional Asthma Management and Prevention program helped pass California diesel emissions regulations that are projected to prevent **150,000 cases of asthma, 12,000 cases of acute bronchitis and 9,400 premature deaths** over 15 years.

**Saving Lives through Cleaner Cooking** With more people dying each year from cooking smoke than from malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS combined, the urgency to transition billions of people to cleaner cooking is enormous. PHI's Cleaner Cookstoves Project supports program evaluation, technical capacity-building and **partnerships with local organizations in Guatemala and India** to reduce mortality from household pollution.

**Connecting Climate Change, Health and Equity** — In California, through advocacy, expert testimony and research, PHI's Center for Climate Change and Health supported what are now the **most progressive climate change bills in the country**. They promote policy solutions to climate change at every level of government, including local, state and global.