



PRACTICE
Greenhealth®



Introduction to Healthcare's Role in Policy and Community-Level Climate Strategies

November 19, 2024

Presenter



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Mission:

"Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) seeks to transform health care worldwide so that it reduces its environmental impact, becomes a community anchor for sustainability, and is a leader in the global movement for environmental health and justice."

HCWH's membership program for hospitals and health systems

(more on this later)

Healthcare threatened by changing climate

Access to healthcare in Eastern Massachusetts is **third-most at risk in nation** from Category 2 hurricane

[Source: [Harvard Chan School](#)]



Source: [WBUR](#)

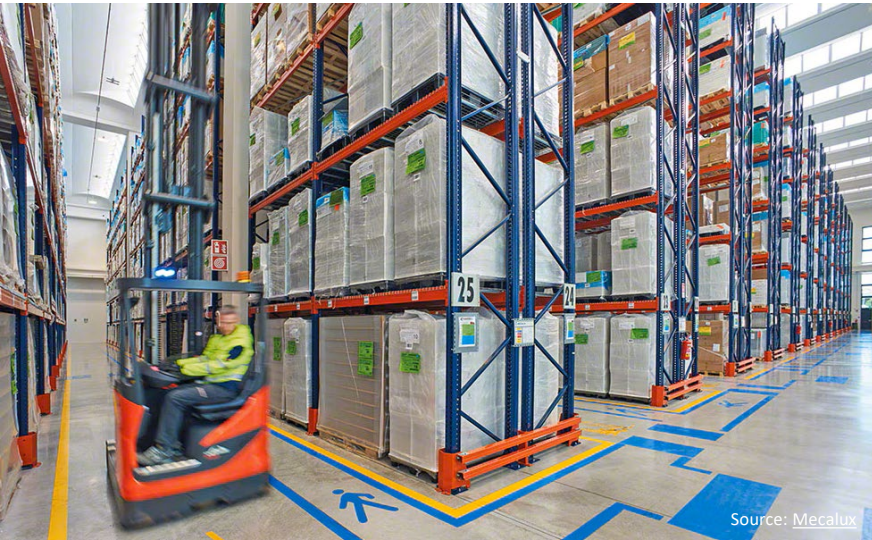


Source: [Boston Globe](#)

Sea level rise & severe rainfall puts **90% of hospital beds at risk from flooding** in Greater Boston [Source: [Harvard Chan School](#)]

Healthcare contributes to changing climate

U.S. healthcare is responsible for approximately **8.5% of national greenhouse gas emissions** [source: [NEJM](#)]



Source: [Mecalux](#)



Source: [MATEP LLC](#)

Purchased goods & Facility-related energy use account for most emissions

Federal, State, & Local Policy Actions

Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA)

IRA provides hospitals with funding and incentives to reduce GHG emissions through clean energy and improved energy efficiency. [source: [HCWH](#)]



White House/HHS Health Sector Climate Pledge

143 organizations (representing 960 hospitals) committed to reducing their emissions and producing detailed climate resilience plans. [source: [HHS](#)]

(>90% of Boston hospitals & ~50% of MA hospitals)



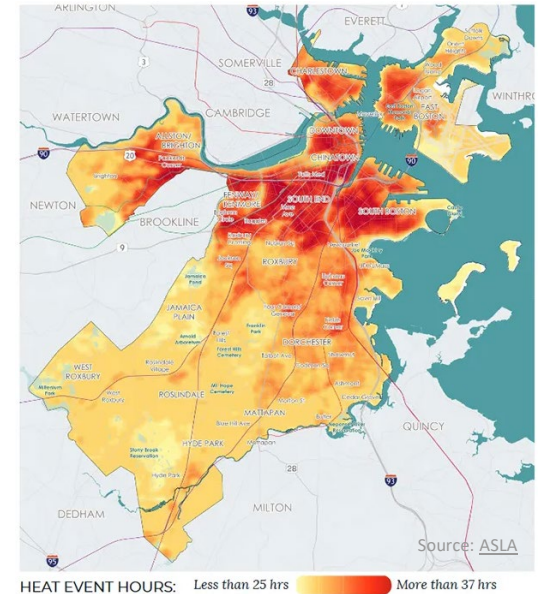
Local policy efforts

Local and state government work-to-date includes heat action plans, air quality monitoring programs, and building emissions reduction requirements

Ex. Boston's 2022 "Heat Resilience Solutions" plan [source: [Boston](#)]

State climate-health policy

- Starting 2025, MassHealth will require all acute-care facilities to begin tracking and reporting emissions [source: [HCWH](#)]
- Oregon and 15+ states offer Medicaid recipients access to A/C units during heat emergencies [source: [EHI Journal](#)]
- NY State Insurance Fund offering \$1 million to hospitals that do climate planning [source: [NYSIF](#)]



How Healthcare Takes Action



Areas for Action



**Proactively
Prepare for
Climate Risks**



**Partner &
Empower
Community**



**Reduce Energy-
Related
Emissions**



**Accelerate
Internal
Sustainability**

Example Hospital Actions



Prepare for Climate Risks

1. **Train healthcare professionals** to address climate-driven health impacts
2. Create, update, and communicate a **hospital climate resilience plan**
3. Incorporate **climate-smart construction** into capital planning

Empower Community

1. **Invest dollars in neighborhood climate projects** led by community-based organizations
2. Collect variety of community feedback and establish spaces for **shared community decision making**
3. Adopt goals and take action to **become a healthcare anchor institution**

Example Hospital Actions

(continued)

Energy Efficiency & Renewables

1. **Reduce energy use** through new technology or practices
2. Build **on-site renewable energy** / join a clean energy collaborative
3. Prioritize decarbonization in new construction
4. **Publicly support Federal/State/Local climate policies**



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Internal Sustainability

1. Commit institution to being **net-zero by 2050**
2. **Hire internal sustainability team** / empower employees across org
3. Commit to latest standards on green procurement
4. Reduce use of carbon-intensive products

How Individuals Take Action



Individual Roles in Driving Solutions

How can *you* make a difference?

- 1. Advocacy within your hospital or workplace**
- 2. Education & outreach**
- 3. Remember: every action counts**

Networks & Resources



Alliance of Nurses for
Healthy Environments

*AHNE provides resources and
internal / external advocacy
opportunities for nurses*

envirn.org

HCWH
**Physicians
Network**

*Platform for doctors to engage
in climate-health initiatives*

[us.noharm.org/initiatives/physician-
network](http://us.noharm.org/initiatives/physician-network)

Tools & Resources: Practice Greenhealth



HCWH's membership organization for hospitals and healthcare.

- Access to sustainability benchmarks and data tools
- Staff support for initiatives like energy efficiency, waste management, sustainable procurement etc.
- Connect with like-minded individuals and organizations
- Other free resources too!

Final thoughts





Thank you. Connect with us!

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Resources

Studies & Other Information

- https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/c-change/news/hospitals-at-risk-of-flooding/?active_tab=1&articles_page=8&research_page=2
- <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2115675>
- <https://noharm.medium.com/the-inflation-reduction-act-brings-new-opportunities-for-health-cares-climate-action-f47a14202c5>
- <https://www.hhs.gov/climate-change-health-equity-environmental-justice/climate-change-health-equity/actions/health-sector-pledge/index.html#:~:text=Specifically%2C%20pledge%20signers%20commit%20to,on%20this%20goal%20every%20year.>
- https://www.linkedin.com/posts/health-care-without-harm_climateaction-healthcareleadership-decarbonization-activity-7241555782004084738-uZOW?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
- <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/11786302241274959>
- <https://www.nysif.com/climatecredit>

Resources (continued)

Resource Networks

- <http://practicegreenhealth.org>
- <http://envirn.org>
- <http://us.noharm.org/initiatives/physician-network>

Images

- <https://www.massgeneralbrigham.org/en/patient-care/international/about/massachusetts-general-hospital>
- <https://dirt.asla.org/2023/05/17/boston-takes-on-its-rising-heat-problem/>
- <https://www.matep.com/>
- <https://www.mecalux.com/case-studies/medical-pharmaceutical-products-warehouse-chiggiato-trasporti>
- <https://www.wbur.org/news/2022/09/29/boston-east-coast-hospitals-risk-of-disruption-flooding-hurricanes>
- <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/09/29/science/boston-area-hospitals-are-among-most-risk-flooding-hurricanes-study-finds/>
- <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/10/16/business/boston-medical-center-solar-panels-energy-assistance/>
- <https://www.recovergreenroofs.com/boston-medical-center-rooftop-farm>