

The Health Consequences of a Changing Climate: Adaptation from a Public Health Perspective

George E. Luber
Division of Environmental Hazards and Health Effects
National Center for Environmental Health
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

At an ever-increasing rate, evidence is accumulating that the earth's climate system is warming and that the health consequences of this warming are already impacting our communities. From the direct effects of weather extremes on morbidity and mortality to the potential for changes in disease ecology and geography brought about by "state shifts" in the earth's biosphere (Barnosky 2012), climate change will be a defining issue for public health in the 21st Century (Chan 2007). To meet this challenge, the Public Health community must develop new methodologies, forge new tools, and build new partnerships. Founded in 2009, the mission of the Climate and Health Program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is to build capacity, at the local, state and federal level, to anticipate the health threats of climate change and prepare the nation's public health infrastructure to meet this challenge. This presentation will describe the health effects of climate change, drawing heavily on the findings reached by the 3rd US National Climate Assessment, and describe ways in which public health agencies can monitor and track these shifts in disease occurrence. This presentation will conclude with a discussion on climate change adaptation strategies in the Public Health sectors with particular attention given to CDC's BRACE framework for adaptation planning.