

Building climate resilience in health care facilities

Fact sheet: October 2024

Key facts

Climate change harms people's health, including mental health, leading to death and illness from extreme weather, food system disruptions and the spread of disease.

An estimated 3.6 billion people – 44% of the world's population – live in areas highly susceptible to climate change.

Unless urgent action is taken, climate change will add 5 million people to the global death toll from undernutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress from 2030 to 2050.

Many countries and areas in the Western Pacific Region are at high risk from climate change and climate related disasters.

Health impacts vary based on the vulnerability and resilience of communities. As health care facilities are the primary point of care, building resilience in facilities must be a priority to address vulnerability to the health impacts of climate change.

Climate change affects health in many ways, including by leading to death and illness from increasingly frequent extreme weather events such as heat, storms and floods, the disruption of food systems, and rise in diseases spread by animals, insects, food and water. Climate change also impacts mental health.

Climate change undermines social determinants of good health, such as livelihoods, equality, and access to health care and social support structures. Groups with risks of vulnerability and disadvantages, such as women, children, minorities, poor people, migrants, older people and those with pre-existing conditions are most affected by climate change.

Short- to medium-term impacts of climate change depend on the levels of risk and resilience in communities. In the longer term, the effects will increasingly depend on actions taken now to increase resilience and address the root causes of climate change, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

WHO response

WHO works with countries and areas to build and strengthen climate-resilience in health care facilities. These efforts help to reduce vulnerabilities in the most disadvantaged communities.

WHO supports Member States to track progress in protecting health from climate change. WHO also supports countries and areas in making vulnerability and adaptation assessments, implementing climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable health care facility initiatives, and developing and/or updating national adaptation plans for the health sector.

WHO is working to build climate resilience in health care facilities in the Western Pacific Region across four areas:

- **Advocacy and partnerships:** Collaborate with United Nations partners, ensure that health is represented in climate agendas, and share information on climate-health threats and opportunities.
- **Monitoring, science and evidence:** Coordinate the review of scientific evidence on climate change and health links; monitor implementation of adaptation actions as well as mitigation commitments;
- **Integrated climate-informed early warning and surveillance:** Support countries and areas to enhance integrated surveillance and implement climate-informed early warning systems.
- **Supporting countries and areas:** Strengthen capacities to improve health systems resilience and adaptation, reduce health vulnerability to climate change and promote health while lowering carbon emissions.

