

Global Consortium on Climate and Health Education

The Global Consortium on Climate and Health Education at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health works to ensure all health professionals have the expertise needed to prevent and respond to the health impacts of climate change and to improve the quality of health and wellbeing of all. We connect, educate, and train doctors, nurses, public health practitioners, mental health practitioners, and allied health specialists around the world.

Our vision is a climate-knowledgeable health workforce, resilient health systems, and healthy communities everywhere.



EDUCATING HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WORLDWIDE

The climate crisis presents urgent, existential threats to human health and health systems, affecting the water we drink, the food we eat, the air we breathe, and in the countless other ways our health intertwines with our environments. Complex climate-driven emergencies, including those related to extreme heat, flooding, poor air quality, food and water insecurity, disease outbreaks, and extreme weather, worsen the health of individuals and communities and jeopardize the stability of societies.

Globally, more extreme and frequent heat waves are affecting increased numbers of vulnerable populations. Air pollution caused by the burning of fossil fuels results in nine million premature deaths annually, according to the WHO. Outbreaks of infectious diseases like Zika, malaria, and dengue fever are emerging in new hot spots. Extreme and more frequent floods, rainstorms, droughts and wildfires are increasingly deadly. Food security is worsening as temperatures and carbon dioxide levels rise, leading to lower nutritional levels, such as decreased protein in crops such as barley, rice, and wheat.

Climate change exacerbates existing health disparities, with negative impacts falling disproportionately on poorer populations, older adults, children, indigenous communities, coastal communities, agricultural and rural communities, and those with limited access to healthcare.

AT A GLANCE

350+
HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS
AND ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS

200,000+
LEARNERS

5,000+
INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

150+
GOVERNMENTAL AND
NON-GOVERNMENTAL PARTNERS

60+
COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

Free
MEMBERSHIP AND AVAILABLE
TO ALL

THE GCCHE NETWORK

To protect the health and well-being of society, the health sector must be equipped to recognize, prevent, and respond to ongoing and future climate-related impacts on patients – especially vulnerable patients – and communities. However, issues related to climate and environmental change are traditionally outside the training and continuing professional development of health professionals, resulting in a workforce in which few have the knowledge and skills to address current and future climate-related threats. Educational programs must be tailored to the needs presented by specific climate hazards, population and health system vulnerabilities, and sociopolitical contexts.

Our members include health professions schools; health systems; professional training associations; civil society organizations; regional and national governments; and private sector companies. Members commit to integrating climate and health into their institutional missions and to educating their students and members on the health impacts of climate change. We aim to nurture a diverse community that is interdisciplinary, multinational, inclusive, and free from bias.

GCHE MEMBER PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

In partnership with our Consortium members, we identify challenges and barriers to building climate-resilient health sectors and convene stakeholders and experts to design and implement solutions. We integrate cutting-edge and evidence-based practices in all of our resources, initiatives, and products.

- Provide free, certificate-based educational courses to health professionals from all backgrounds
- Provide technical support and consultation to governmental, intergovernmental, and academic organizations
- Create, support, and share interdisciplinary training programs and educational resources on climate change and health
- Convene member institutions and stakeholders to share best scientific and educational practices
- Partner with members, NGO's, health societies, and government organizations to develop standards and core competencies for knowledge and practice on the health impacts of climate change
- Support the development of global academic partnerships to foster mutual learning, particularly in under-resourced countries
- Serve as a partner for educational initiatives related to climate change and health outside of the health sector

In addition to our educational programs, we advocate for the inclusion of climate and health competencies within health professional accreditation bodies and programs which educate and credential front-line health professionals.

ABOUT THE GCCHE

Launched in 2017, the Global Consortium on Climate and Health Education is based at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, an internationally recognized leader in research and education on the health impacts of climate change. At the 2015 Paris Climate Accords, Columbia Mailman School partnered with the Obama Administration to spearhead a pledge – endorsed by the World Health Organization and 115 health professions schools and programs around the world – to educate tomorrow's health leaders on the health impacts of climate change.

The GCCHE is led by Cecilia Sorensen, MD, associate professor, Environmental Health Sciences at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health and associate professor, emergency medicine at Columbia University Irving Medical Center. Dr. Sorensen is a physician-investigator working at the nexus of climate change and human health, translating research into policy, clinical action, and education to build resilience in vulnerable communities.

Columbia Mailman experts investigate a variety of climate and health issues including infectious and chronic diseases, air pollution, heat extremes, hurricanes, flooding, wildfires, drought, food insecurity, hospital sustainability, and more. On every front in the global public health response to climate change, Columbia Mailman faculty and students are driving cross-disciplinary science; translating science into action; and partnering with governments, NGOs, and healthcare providers across all dimensions of climate change's impacts on health, with a continued attention to the most vulnerable populations around the world.