

# Webinar Summary Report: Health National Chapter

## Introduction

The Fourth National Climate Assessment (NCA4), currently in development, will assess the science of climate change and its impacts across the United States. It will document climate change-related impacts and responses for various sectors and regions, with the goal of better informing public and private decision-making at all levels.

To ensure that the assessment is informed by and useful to stakeholders, engagement activities were planned for many of the 17 National Chapters. These activities provided stakeholders an opportunity to provide input to and exchange ideas with the chapter author team on key message formulation, share relevant resources, and give individual feedback on issues of importance to the chapter topic.

## Webinar Structure

National chapter webinars were organized and hosted by the coordinating lead authors (CLA) and chapter leads (CL) with coordination from NCA4 staff from the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP). Invitations to the webinars were distributed by the hosts, author team, and USGCRP staff to their stakeholder networks.

## Health Engagement Webinar

On March 22, 2017, the NCA4 Health chapter team, in collaboration with the USGCRP's Interagency Crosscutting Group on Climate Change and Human Health (CCHHG), held a public engagement webinar. The objectives of the webinar were to gather input from the roughly 100 stakeholders who participated, including authors of the regional chapters, to help inform the writing and development of NCA4, and to raise awareness of the process and timeline for NCA4.

## Chapter Author Team

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## Overview and Topics of Discussion

Dr. John Balbus opened the webinar by providing an overview of USGCRP, the structure of NCA4, and timeline for completion. In addition, Dr. Balbus presented the sustained National Climate Assessment

process and walked through the Key Messages from the 2016 Climate and Health Assessment. This review served as a reminder of what was covered in past reports and helped prepare the audience to consider new advances or topics for NCA4.

Dr. Kristie Ebi led the remainder of the webinar and walked through the current direction and scope of NCA4's health chapter. While the preliminary scope of the chapter is subject to change throughout the assessment process, Dr. Ebi presented on a few emerging focal areas:

- **Health impacts:** Summary of the 2016 Climate and Health Assessment and assessment of scientific advances since the literature cut-off for the report.
- **Health adaptation:** Assess the science of adaptation and health risk management. Review of general health adaptation options, recent innovations, evaluations of adaptation effectiveness, and barriers and limits to their deployment.
- **Economic impacts to the health sector:** Assess how climate change can affect health-sensitive economies, including labor force, work productivity, and livelihoods. In addition, authors are assessing economic valuations and risks to the U.S. healthcare system itself.
- **Health co-benefits:** Assess the benefits to public health from policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or develop adaptation interventions. These include changes to transportation systems, dietary choices, and green infrastructure.

## Key Takeaways

Participants raised many questions and provided comments regarding the chapter's scope, the connections to the broader report, and research gaps. The key takeaways for the health chapter from the discussion are listed below.

### Mental Health and Wellness

- Awareness surrounding the mental health impacts from climate change is growing and the authors were questioned on the extent to which the literature has matured since the 2016 Climate and Health Assessment. One particular question centered around interpersonal and collective violence and the connection to climate change.

### Infectious Disease

- There were several questions on how climate-sensitive infectious diseases will be handled in the chapter, particularly if there is any scientific information on the environmental connection to the 2016 Zika outbreak.

### Adaptation

- There were questions related to maladaptation and if the chapter intends to investigate or highlight some of those negative interventions specifically for health. There was also a comment on better articulating how people can adapt to weather and environmental exposures based on the best available science.

## Research Gaps

- There was a discussion of how the assessment can better bridge the gap between climate and weather, in the context of health impacts. In addition, there was a suggestion to leverage the different tools from the disaster epidemiology community to better articulate the data needs for climate and health impacts relating to extreme weather.