



Minnesota Chapter



Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55155

December 14, 2021

Dear Governor Walz,

As health professional organizations across the state of Minnesota concerned about the climate crisis and committed to climate equity, we have signed the attached Minnesota Declaration on Climate Change and Health declaring climate change a health emergency. We are writing to you to request additional resources for the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to fulfill their mission to protect the health of all Minnesotans, through their Climate and Health Program. MDH's web site states: "The Minnesota Climate & Health Program is focused on improving our ability to protect public health and prevent future harms from climate change." We are concerned that MDH's federal funding for the Climate and Health Program has not been renewed, leaving a much-diminished program.

Climate change threatens individual and community health, with the greatest impacts on the communities least resourced to adapt to and address these changes. Communities of color, low-income communities, Indigenous people and people with disabilities and chronic illnesses are at highest risk for impacts from climate change. Now more than ever we need the expertise of MDH to address the climate crisis as a health emergency and assist communities to adapt to our changing climate.

We appreciate the work of the Climate Change Subcabinet and the Governor's Advisory Council on Climate Change, to "guide the Walz-Flanagan Administration in the pursuit of bold and collaborative action to combat climate change." As your administration develops a Climate Action Framework, it is obvious that MDH should continue to play a critical role in research, education, health tracking and technical assistance on an array of issues including extreme heat, drinking water protection, vector-borne diseases, respiratory and mental health, sustainability, and emergency preparedness. It is also important that MDH have the capacity to work with communities, health care systems and local health departments in assessing their vulnerabilities to climate change, choosing the adaptation solutions that work for them and implementing actions that will increase their resilience to climate change.

As we face the growing threat of climate change to our health, our communities, our environment and our economies, we request that you prioritize replacement funding for MDH to maintain and grow a robust climate and health program.

Thank you for your commitment to a healthy climate and for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Brenna Doheny MPH, PhD, Executive Director
Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate

Katie Huffling DNP, RN, CNM, FAAN, Executive Director
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

Jon Hunter, Senior Director Clean Air
American Lung Association in Minnesota

Sheldon Berkowitz MD, FAAP, President
Minnesota Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics

Terra Carey, MPH CPHQ CPPS, Executive Director
Minnesota Doctors for Health Equity

Heidi Orstad DNP, RN, PHN, CCM
Katheren Koehn MA, RN, FAAN
Minnesota Organization of Registered Nurses

Elizabeth Moe M.Phil, President
Minnesota Public Health Association

Sarah Traxler MD, President
Twin Cities Medical Society

Attachment: Minnesota Declaration on Climate Change and Health

CC.

Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan
Commissioner Jan Malcolm, MDH
Kristin Raab, MDH
Katie Pratt, EQB