HEALTH MESSAGING ON CARBON POLLUTION STANDARDS

TOOLKIT FOR STATE ADVOCATES

May 2014
May 1, 2014

Dear Public Health Advocate:

Thank you for taking the time to explore this toolkit and its elements. The proactive use of communications tools like these is vital to effective campaigns for larger causes.

And this is the mother of all causes—stopping climate change. The carbon pollution standards on existing and new power plants being developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are game changers in the wider national and international effort to curb greenhouse gas emissions (GHG).

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide public health advocates and professionals with tools to engage specific audiences on the benefits of carbon pollution standards and their clear connections to climate change. The toolkit is geared for the challenges of messaging on these issues in the politically-sensitive Southeast region of the United States. Nevertheless, many of the tools available may be adapted to other related environmental issues and other challenging regions of the country. This toolkit is meant to be open-sourced for all public health advocates. Please share this resource with your allies and organizational partners.

This toolkit provides user-friendly information to effectively target editorial boards, state legislators, federal agencies, state offices, and members of the press to deliver impactful messaging on the urgent need for effective carbon pollution standards.

If you wish to access the public health toolkit online and download the templates and information, please visit this DropBox website link (http://bit.ly/1slIq6O).

This kit reflects the hard work of members of the Southeast Public Health Caucus, and the development of materials and recommendations by Resource Media. Many thanks to all for their selfless efforts.

Sincerely,
Members of the Public Health Caucus in the Southeast Climate & Energy Network, and Resource Media
WHO’S WHO

The Southeast Public Health Caucus has three functions: first, to develop and share educational and organizing resources for public health state campaigns and movement-building; second, to develop a resource list of medical and public health organizations and professionals in the Southeast whose interest and/or expertise are aligned with our issues; and lastly, to develop joint regional public health campaigns as needed. Members of the Southeast Public Health Caucus include:

- Alliance for Affordable Energy – Louisiana (www.all4energy.org)
- Appalachian Voices – Southeast region (www.appvoices.org)
- Clean Air Carolina – North Carolina (www.cleanaircarolina.org)
- GASP – Alabama (www.gaspgroup.org)
- GreenLaw – Georgia (www.greenlaw.org)
- Kentucky Environmental Foundation – Kentucky (www.kyenvironmentalfoundation.org)
- Medical Advocates for Healthy Air - North Carolina (www.medicaladvocatesforhealthyair.org)
- Mothers & Others for Clean Air – Georgia (www.mothersandothersforcleanair.org)
- Southeast Climate & Energy Network – Southeast region (www.usclimatenetwork.org)

Resource Media is a nonprofit strategic communications firm helping partners succeed in today's dynamic media landscape. Resource Media develops and executes smart communications strategies for the environment and public health to: re-frame contentious debates in ways that resonate with target audiences; help advocates use their communications assets efficiently and effectively; and increase the power and impact of campaigns.

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The Southeast Climate & Energy Network (SCEN) is a core program of the U.S. Climate Action Network, and its mission is strategic coordination among organizations in the Southeast to secure fair, just and science-based climate and energy policies. States in covered in the network are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

www.usclimatenetwork.org
@USCAN

Questions or comments? Please contact Rudi Navarra at the Southeast Climate & Energy Network (rnavarra@climatenetwork.org) or Cat Lazaroff at Resource Media (cat@resource-media.org).
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Climate Messages for Health & Medical Professionals
Southeast Climate & Energy Network, Public Health Caucus

In June 2014, the US Environmental Protection Agency is expected to open a public comment period on a proposal to curb carbon emissions from existing power plants, which could significantly reduce emissions from coal-fired power.

The messages below are designed to be delivered by doctors, nurses and other health professionals who support efforts to tackle climate change, such as these new EPA rules. They address both the health impacts of climate change itself, as well as the impacts of coal-fired power plants specifically. These messages are supported by a variety of scientific and medical evidence (see attached resource sheet of sources), as well as a variety of research into public perceptions of coal, energy and climate change.

All of the messages are designed to lead with health impacts that are recognizable in the Southeast.

TOPLINE MESSAGES:

Pollution from coal-fired power plants contaminates our air and water, making people—especially children and the elderly—sick. Power plants are already required to limit emissions of toxins like mercury, arsenic and other heavy metals, but there are currently no limits on the amount of carbon pollution these plants can release. Yet carbon pollution from power plants is among the leading causes of climate change, which the American Medical Association associates with increased rates of asthma and respiratory disease, vector-borne diseases, and heat-related ailments.

Linking power plant pollution to climate disruption:
Unregulated carbon pollution hurts us all because it contributes to global climate disruption, leading to rising temperatures, more frequent severe weather events, and contributing to the spread of certain diseases, as confirmed by the most recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In fact, the World Health Organization estimates that climate change will result in longer transmission seasons of vector-borne diseases like Lyme disease and West Nile virus, as well as a broadening of places these diseases appear.

Reducing carbon pollution from coal-fired power plants is the best way for the U.S. to reduce the risks of climate disruption, because these emissions make up 40 percent of our nation’s climate pollution. The EPA’s plan to cap carbon pollution from power plants is the fastest way to make our air healthier and tackle climate disruption.
ASTHMA & ALLERGIES:

Particulate pollution from coal-fired power plants is a major contributor to asthma. So is the hotter weather that comes with climate disruption, which can increase levels of ozone and allergens such as pollen, according to the World Health Organization. If we want our kids to be able to breathe healthy air while they’re playing outside, we need to cut carbon pollution from power plants.

DISEASE:

Hotter weather and heavier rains are making some diseases spread faster and farther, like Lyme disease, West Nile virus, and even parasites and food poisoning, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization. We can’t keep ourselves and our kids safe unless we tackle the carbon pollution that’s causing our climate to change.

WEATHER & HEAT:

Extreme weather events – like the snow and ice storms that hit the Southeast this winter, the hurricanes that impact our coasts, and the heavy rains that cause dangerous flooding and mudslides – are becoming more common because of climate disruption. Global losses from extreme weather have risen to nearly $200 billion each year. If we want to slow the pace of these extreme events, we need to tackle the carbon pollution that causes climate disruption.

According to the World Health Organization, extreme heat events can be very dangerous, particularly for the elderly. These events will become increasingly common unless we cut back on the carbon pollution that causes climate change.

ADD YOUR OWN STORIES

For each of the messages above, we’ve been as specific as possible about the health impacts, and linked those impacts to common activities. As a rule, people do not think about their health in the abstract – they think of the health problems that they, their families or their friends have actually experienced. They also think about what changes these health problems may require in their lives – spending less time playing with their kids because they’re having trouble breathing, for example.

It’s impossible to develop a “one size fits all” message that covers every story. Therefore, we recommend that public health professionals talk about specific events, incidents and even patients. Without, of course, naming names and breaching confidentiality, talking about real people having asthma attacks or heat-
related illnesses, real weather events and other real issues can make the difference between a conversation that falls flat, and a conversation that changes minds.

MORE TIPS
For more tips on how medical and public health professionals can speak out about climate change, read: *Conveying the Human Implications of Climate Change: A Climate Change Communication Primer for Public Health Professionals*, by Maibach E, Nisbet M, & Weathers M. (2011)
Part of preparing to speak out on a divisive issue like climate disruption is anticipating the hard questions that reporters, editorial boards, and public officials might ask. Here are some examples of those tough questions, and suggestions for responses. Please note, these responses are not intended as the only possible answers, but as examples of what a well-considered response should look like.

**Shouldn’t doctors focus on patients, not politics?**
The impact of carbon pollution isn’t a political issue, it’s a fact. When medical science tells us, as it does today, that the health of our communities is being impacted by something that we have the power to change, it would be irresponsible to stay silent.

Doctors and other medical professionals were among the first to speak out about the risks of smoking, despite the controversy at the time. Just as people can decide not to smoke tobacco, Americans can decide to support a shift away from polluting energy sources.

**How can you tell if a particular patient’s illness is climate related?**
As a medical professional, my job is to care for my patients. When I consider the prospect of more Lyme disease and more kids with asthma, then I have to speak up. Can I tie any particular case of asthma or Lyme disease to a specific coal plant? No. Is that my job? No. My job is to advocate for what’s right for my patients.

**Why should we put jobs and the economy at risk by curbing carbon emissions from power plants?**
Carbon pollution is putting health and lives at risk. Unless we curb carbon emissions, those risks will continue to rise, and more people will get sick and even die.

America has a history of making the right choices that will save lives, like restricting the use of dangerous substances like asbestos, arsenic and mercury, even when that meant companies had to spend money to change their products. Carbon pollution is a dangerous substance, and reducing those emissions is the right decision for all of us.

**You’ve told us that hot weather is dangerous. But you’re also telling us that the power plants that provide the energy for things like air conditioning are dangerous. How can you have it both ways?**
America is bringing more clean, renewable energy on line all the time. That clean power can help us power the tools we need to help people avoid the worst effects of climate change, like cooling centers in the summer. We don’t have to give up our air conditioners – we just have to change the way we power them.
Talking About Climate Change
The Latest Word on the Words to Use

Climate change. Global warming. Global climate disruption. All of these terms refer to the same phenomenon: the warming of the Earth’s average temperatures due to the burning of fossil fuels, and the changes in weather and climate patterns that result.

So why use one term over another? Because even though the terms are scientifically equivalent, they are not equivalent in how audiences hear them. A growing amount of research shows that *climate disruption* resonates better with most audiences; they relate those words to the abnormal weather and increasingly powerful weather-related disasters experienced around the globe.

Here are some tips about language to use (with special thanks to the Franklin Forum & Breakthrough Strategies):

**DO SAY: Climate disruption**

*Climate disruption* brings on hotter temperatures, but also more blizzards, heavier rainfalls, and more droughts. Climate disruption suggests that the normal range of climate events is thrown out of balance without suggesting in that the only effect of rising greenhouse gas levels is hotter temperatures.

**DO SAY: Extreme weather**

Everyone can see the weather *getting more severe*, with more frequent and destructive droughts, floods, wildfires, and storms. A single extreme weather event does not constitute a trend. But when we’ve been hit with record storm after record storm, and climate patterns are becoming more erratic and severe, there is little question that this is what climate disruption looks like. It’s *exactly* what scientists have been warning us about for decades.

**DO SAY: We can solve this.**

American businesses are developing new energy technologies that harness power from the sun and wind, and those technologies are already being installed around the country. By investing in energy innovations and curbing the use of fossil fuels, the U.S. can reduce carbon emissions while growing our economy.

We know an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. By acting now to curb carbon emissions, we can prevent climate disruption from becoming much worse.
References for Climate Messages  
Southeast Climate & Energy Network, Public Health Caucus

WEATHER & HEAT: EVIDENCE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change:
In most land regions the frequency of warm days and warm nights will likely increase in the next decades, while that of cold days and cold nights will decrease. Models project near-term increases in the duration, intensity and spatial extent of heat waves and warm spells. These changes may proceed at a different rate than the mean warming. For example, several studies project that European high-percentile summer temperatures warm faster than mean temperatures.

The frequency and intensity of heavy precipitation events over land will likely increase on average in the near term.


National Weather Service:
Heat is one of the leading weather-related killers in the United States, resulting in hundreds of fatalities each year.

Source: http://nws.noaa.gov/os/heat/index.shtml

American Meteorological Society:
Warming of the climate system now is unequivocal, according to many different kinds of evidence. Observations show increases in globally averaged air and ocean temperatures, as well as widespread melting of snow and ice and rising globally averaged sea level. Surface temperature data for Earth as a whole, including readings over both land and ocean, show an increase of about 0.8°C (1.4°F) over the period 1901—2010 and about 0.5°C (0.9°F) over the period 1979–2010 (the era for which satellite-based temperature data are routinely available). Due to natural variability, not every year is warmer than the preceding year globally. Nevertheless, all of the 10 warmest years in the global temperature records up to 2011 have occurred since 1997, with 2005 and 2010 being the warmest two years in more than a century of global records. The warming trend is greatest in northern high latitudes and over land. In the U.S., most of the observed warming has occurred in the West and in Alaska; for the
nation as a whole, there have been twice as many record daily high temperatures as record daily low temperatures in the first decade of the 21st century.

Source: https://www.ametsoc.org/policy/2012climatechange.html

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**NASA:**

A NASA-led modeling study provides new evidence that global warming may increase the risk for extreme rainfall and drought.

The study shows for the first time how rising carbon dioxide concentrations could affect the entire range of rainfall types on Earth.

Source: http://www.nasa.gov/home/hqnews/2013/may/HQ_13-119_Rainfall_Response.html

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**American Geophysical Union:**

Probable maximum precipitation (PMP) is the greatest accumulation of precipitation for a given duration meteorologically possible for an area. Climate change effects on PMP are analyzed, in particular, maximization of moisture and persistent upward motion, using both climate model simulations and conceptual models of relevant meteorological systems…

Thus, our conclusion is that the most scientifically sound projection is that PMP values will increase in the future due to higher levels of atmospheric moisture content and consequent higher levels of moisture transport into storms.

WEATHER & HEAT: HEALTH IMPACTS

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Climate change will bring more heat waves to the U.S. Increases in the number of people living in cities, as well as population aging, will further increase heat-related health risks. Studies suggest that, if current emissions hold steady, excess heat-related deaths in the U.S. could climb from an average of about 700 each year currently, to between 3,000 and 5,000 per year by 2050.

Source: http://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/heat.htm

Both increased average temperatures and increasingly frequent and severe extreme heat events produce increased risks of heat-related illness and death that can be significant. The European heat wave of 2003 caused more than 35,000 excess deaths. Human susceptibility to heat-related illness depends on several different factors, from physiologic adaptation to the local environment to socioeconomic status, and the impact of these changing exposures will depend on the vulnerability of exposed populations.

Socioeconomic factors also determine vulnerability; economically is advantaged and socially isolated people face higher burdens of death from heat. Cities and climate are co-evolving in a manner that will certainly amplify both the health effects of heat and the vulnerability of urban populations to heat-related deaths by magnifying the increased temperatures caused by climate change as compared to adjacent rural and suburban locales.

Source: http://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/heat_related.htm

American Nurses Association:
Climate Change is recognized by the American Nurses Association (ANA) as an unprecedented phenomena threatening human and environmental health. Climate change has profound impacts on human health. Increased temperatures exacerbate heat-related illnesses and certain chronic diseases.


Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials supports the widespread scientific consensus that the world’s climate is changing, and that climate change has significant impact on human health. Climate change will threaten the basic life systems on which we depend: our water, food, air and shelter. Health
effects related to climate change include death and illness from heat waves, injuries from extreme weather events, increased air pollution with concomitant rises in respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, water shortages and an increased incidence of vector- and water-borne diseases.


World Health Organization
Extreme high air temperatures contribute directly to deaths from cardiovascular and respiratory disease, particularly among elderly people. In the heat wave of summer 2003 in Europe for example, more than 70,000 excess deaths were recorded2.

http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs266/en/

ASTHMA & ALLERGIES

World Health Organization
High temperatures also raise the levels of ozone and other pollutants in the air that exacerbate cardiovascular and respiratory disease. Urban air pollution causes about 1.2 million deaths every year. Pollen and other aeroallergen levels are also higher in extreme heat. These can trigger asthma, which affects around 300 million people. Ongoing temperature increases are expected to increase this burden.

Source: http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs266/en/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Climate change will affect air quality through several pathways including production and allergenicity of aeroallergens such as pollen and mold spores and increases in regional ambient concentrations of ozone, fine particles, and dust. Some of these pollutants can directly cause respiratory disease or exacerbate respiratory disease in susceptible individuals.

Source: http://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/airway_diseases.htm

American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology
In fact, pollen counts are expected to more than double by 2040, according to a study presented at a meeting of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology last fall.
While difficult to predict, according to this article, some of the anticipated changes that could occur specifically regarding respiratory allergies with climate warming and higher levels of greenhouse gases may include:

1. Longer pollen seasons, with increased morbidity from respiratory allergies. This view is supported by Scandinavian studies on duration and pollen concentrations associated with birch tree pollination over 20-33 years.
2. Altered distribution of pollenating plants into new areas, including above former tree lines, leading to broader distribution.
3. Increased CO2 leading to earlier plant flowering and higher pollen concentrations. Studies indicate with CO2 levels double, ragweed plant pollen production increases 30-90%.
4. Increased ozone from hot sunny days leading to more symptoms for those at risk for asthma.
5. Increased mold production with rising sea levels and altered rainfall patterns.
6. Heightened stinging and biting insect frequencies, especially with population in new areas.


American Medical Association
If physicians want evidence of climate change, they may well find it in their own offices. Patients are presenting with illnesses that once happened only in warmer areas. Chronic conditions are becoming aggravated by more frequent and extended heat waves. Allergy and asthma seasons are getting longer.


American Academy of Pediatrics:
Children represent a particularly vulnerable group that is likely to suffer disproportionately from both direct and indirect adverse health effects of climate change.

Children are especially vulnerable to both short-term illness and long-term damage from ambient air pollution, because their lungs are developing and growing, they breathe at a higher rate than adults, and they spend more time outdoors engaging in vigorous physical activity. Air pollution (such as ozone and particulate matter) causes respiratory and asthma hospitalizations, school absences, increased respiratory symptoms, and decrements in lung function.

To the extent that exposure to aeroallergens contributes to the incidence, prevalence, and severity of asthma, atopy, and other respiratory disease, climate change will affect the pattern of disease in children.
Some investigators have argued that part of the current global increase in childhood asthma can be explained by increased exposure to aeroallergens driven by climate change.

Source: http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/120/5/e1359.full?sid=bd9574fb-4575-4d35-a46e-a63394e68331

**American Public Health Association:**
Climate change is a public health issue…with environmental consequences.

The science is clear that climate change is real and that it presents significant and costly health challenges. In fact, the World Health Organization estimates that climate change is already linked to more than 150,000 deaths each year.


The adverse public health impacts of projected changes in global climate also are anticipated to be especially severe among susceptible subpopulations, especially children, the elderly, those with underlying chronic diseases, and those in impoverished communities, particularly the urban poor, within the United States.

Source: http://www.apha.org/advocacy/policy/policysearch/default.htm?id=1351

**Association of State and Territorial Health Officials**
The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials supports the widespread scientific consensus that the world’s climate is changing, and that climate change has significant impact on human health. Climate change will threaten the basic life systems on which we depend: our water, food, air and shelter. Health effects related to climate change include death and illness from heat waves, injuries from extreme weather events, increased air pollution with concomitant rises in respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, water shortages and an increased incidence of vector- and water-borne diseases.

- ASTHO recognizes that climate change has serious, far-reaching implications for the health of this generation and future generations, especially for the most vulnerable populations.

OTHER DISEASES

World Health Organization
Climatic conditions strongly affect water-borne diseases and diseases transmitted through insects, snails or other cold blooded animals.

Changes in climate are likely to lengthen the transmission seasons of important vector-borne diseases and to alter their geographic range. For example, climate change is projected to widen significantly the area of China where the snail-borne disease schistosomiasis occurs⁵.

Source: http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs266/en/

Malaria is strongly influenced by climate. Transmitted by Anopheles mosquitoes, malaria kills almost 1 million people every year – mainly African children under five years old. The Aedes mosquito vector of dengue is also highly sensitive to climate conditions. Studies suggest that climate change could expose an additional 2 billion people to dengue transmission by the 2080s⁶.

Rodents, which proliferate in temperate regions following mild wet winters, act as reservoirs for various diseases. Certain rodent-borne diseases are associated with flooding, including leptospirosis, tularemia and viral haemorrhagic diseases. Other diseases associated with rodents and ticks, and which show associations with climatic variability, include Lyme disease, tick borne encephalitis, and hantavirus pulmonary syndrome.


Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
The incidence of vector-borne and zoonotic diseases (VBZD) is difficult to predict and model. Climate is one of many variables known to affect the rates of these infectious diseases. Climate change may result in changing distribution of VBZD prevalent in the U.S. This could cause formerly-prevalent diseases such as malaria and dengue fever to re-emerge, or facilitate the introduction and spread of new disease agents, such as West Nile virus.

Source: http://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/vectorborne.htm

National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America:
Climate change will affect the abundance and seasonality of West Nile virus (WNV) vectors, altering the risk of virus transmission to humans.

Source: http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2013/09/04/1307135110.abstract
IMPACTS OF OTHER POWER PLANT POLLUTANTS

Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry:
The two air pollutants associated with the greatest burden of death and disease are fine particulate matter (PM2.5), which comes from a variety of anthropogenic and natural sources, and ozone, which is mostly formed in the atmosphere from a chemical reaction between nitrogen oxides, sunlight, and volatile organic compounds. Health effects associated with both air pollutants include the exacerbation of chronic lung disease, asthma, and myocardial infarction. Particulate matter has also been associated with adverse birth outcomes and neurodevelopmental delays.

In addition to increased exposure to individual contaminants influencing the existing disease burden, nonchemical stressors related to GCC may alter the vulnerability of humans to toxic insults. The extreme temperatures and high ozone levels experienced during heat waves are independently associated with increased cardiovascular mortality, but temperature also appears to interact with ozone, increasing short-term mortality beyond that expected for either stressor acting independently. Temperature has also been observed to modulate the impact of cardiovascular mortality due to particulate matter in ambient air.

Health effects associated with both air pollutants include the exacerbation of chronic lung disease, asthma, and myocardial infarction. Particulate matter has also been associated with adverse birth outcomes and neurodevelopmental delays. In the United States, it has been estimated that fine particulate air pollution was responsible for over 130,000 deaths and ozone air pollution for over 4,700 deaths in the year 2005.


Journal of Medical Toxicology:
The World Health Organization estimates that particulate matter (PM) air pollution contributes to approximately 800,000 premature deaths each year, ranking it the 13th leading cause of mortality worldwide.

The data demonstrating PM's effect on the cardiovascular system are strong. Populations subjected to long-term exposure to PM have a significantly higher cardiovascular incident and mortality rate. Short-term acute exposures subtly increase the rate of cardiovascular events within days of a pollution spike.

**The Global Climate and Health Alliance:**

“Cleaning up the air we breathe prevents noncommunicable diseases as well as reduces disease risks among women and vulnerable groups, including children and the elderly,” says Dr Flavia Bustreo, WHO Assistant Director-General Family, Women and Children’s Health.

Source: [http://www.climateandhealthalliance.org/ipcc](http://www.climateandhealthalliance.org/ipcc)

**MORE INFORMATION**

For more information on connecting human health and climate change:

Media Relations Handbook
A Guide for Responding to and Generating Media
1. Message Basics

Messages are the heart of the story you are trying to tell. They are simple ideas that appeal to the values that are important to the audience you are trying to reach and the decision-makers who hold the key to helping you achieve your objectives.

You should be able to explain your message in a sentence or two. If it requires a paragraph or more, keep working. Remember, though, messages are not necessarily soundbites; they are ideas you want to get across. They can be reinforced by soundbites, phrases, statistics and anecdotes.

Good messages start with carefully defining your goals. Be as detailed as possible about what you want to achieve and who can help make that happen. Effective messages should include the following elements:

- A problem or threat
- The core values that are at stake
- A solution

Depending on the issues you are working on, it may seem that there are many messages that could be relevant to your work. Not all of them are equal, however, so you should make sure to focus only on the ones most likely to move your target audience to make the decision you want. Ideally, you should have only one core message, but certainly no more than three. More than that is confusing and will dilute the strength of your strongest messages.

A MEDIA PRIMER: WHAT DO REPORTERS WANT?
Reporters need a “news hook” to draw their audience in. A good story includes:

Framing climate change in terms of real-word consequences, like super-storms and flooding, helps to humanize the issue.
Something new: An issue or development that hasn’t been reported on before, or a new twist to something that has.

Something emotional and moving: A reporter’s job is to make a connection with readers, listeners and viewers. Make your story personal, and let your passion show.

Something relatively easy to digest: This does not mean “dumb down” your material. Just point out the most interesting, newsworthy pieces of your 50-page report or lengthy testimony.

Something timely: Issues connected to deadlines, anniversaries or milestones are natural hooks.

Something visual: With more people consuming news online than in the newspaper or other traditional media, imagery is increasingly important. Think about the photos or graphics that help tell your story, and include them in your pitch.

Something unexpected: An element of surprise will set your story apart from the sea of pitches the average reporter receives every day.

Continuity of coverage: Chances are good that if a media outlet has covered an issue in any depth previously, they will continue to report on new developments.

If you can tailor your story to include these characteristics, chances improve that you can persuade a reporter to cover it or that you can convince an opinion page editor to give your issue space, whether through an editorial or an op-ed.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

When a reporter calls, you should feel free to ask some questions of your own, and then schedule a time to talk later, after you have had a chance to prepare. Here are four key questions to ask:

- What is the story about?
- What outlet is it for? (Once you know this, consider whether the media outlet is one that reaches one of your target audiences, and check past coverage on your issue).
- Who else are they interviewing? What is your organization’s role in the piece?
- What is the deadline and when is the interview likely to be published or broadcast?
If you are comfortable with the answers to all of these questions and feel an interview gives you a good opportunity to get out your organization’s messages, go for it. If you don’t feel you are the right messenger, consider suggesting someone else from your list of spokespeople or partner groups who might be more appropriate or could make a stronger statement. If the story just isn’t on the right topic or won’t give you the forum to discuss what you want to discuss, consider turning it down. Spend your time on something that will let you get your message out clearly.

**BE PREPARED!**

Skilled spokespeople are adept at the art of responding and bridging, which allows them to deliver their core message no matter the question. A bridge statement might include, “That’s an interesting question, but what’s really important is…” This allows you to repeat your message again and again. Know the point you want to make; have simple facts and figures ready to support your main point. Try to identify stories and anecdotes that will help an uninformed viewer or reader understand your issue. Practice makes perfect. Very few people are good at interviews naturally. It takes practice to perfect the art of staying on message. You should provide any spokespeople for your organization with access to training and practicing opportunities to ensure they are proficient in delivering a core message.

The upside to media interviews is that they are a vehicle that lets you tell your story to the world and frame the issues you’re working on in helpful way. And it’s free. The downside is that with the news media, you turn the reins over to someone else to control. Remember: Journalists are conduits, not your ultimate audience. They are neither friend nor foe. They are storytellers who can help you reach your audience. Address your points to your key audience among their readers.

**JUDGE YOUR MESSAGE**

- Define your goal (What are you trying to achieve?)
- Identify your target (Who do you have to convince?)
- Are the core values clear?
- Is the problem or threat convincing?
- Is the solution simple and “common sense?”
- Is the language “plain English?”
- Is the language compelling, without being shrill?
- Is the message about results? (Rather than process.)
- Are you diluting your strongest most effective message by sending more than one?
- Are you ready for the Big Four counter-arguments?
  - “It costs too much.”
  - “You are messing with our way of life.”
  - “You are exaggerating.”
  - “We’ve taken care of the problem. It’s fixed.”
TAKE CONTROL OF THE INTERVIEW

Know what you’re answering
Make sure you understand the question. If you’re asked a question that is confusing or unclear, ask the reporter to repeat or clarify it.

Make yourself quotable
Provide the reporter with positive, appealing words and images that will make them want to put your message in their story. Typically, your comments will be edited to about 5 to 15 seconds or a short sentence, so focus on getting your point across efficiently. Direct quotes are almost never more than two sentences.

Listen as much as you talk.
A classic journalist trick is to ask light-weight questions, get you talking and sit back to let you “babble on,” saying things you wish you hadn’t. Be economical with your words. Don’t be afraid of silence. If there is a pause or lapse in the interview, it is the reporter’s job to fill it, not yours. Some reporters also will use extended silence as a technique to get an interview subject talking. Don’t take the bait and fill the void with unsolicited information.

Take it from the top; make sure to correct misconceptions
Even though you may have sent advance materials, do not expect that a reporter has read them thoroughly or really knows what your issue/campaign is about. Be able to summarize your issue with a quick overview that will set the stage for your main message. Correct misinformation with facts and references whenever possible.

Don’t make things up
Never make things up or spin the facts. If you don’t know, tell them that you don’t know. If you can find out, let them know and call back or email with the information later.

Use analogies or descriptive terms rather than statistics
Create an image by saying that a new runway is 30 football fields long rather than citing the statistic that says the runway is several thousand feet long.

Never use jargon or acronyms
Remember, most people don’t have insider knowledge of your issue. Speak in simple, non-technical terms, not insider jargon or acronyms that only professionals will understand.

Know your opponents’ viewpoints and have counterpoints ready
It is rare for the media to only report one side of the story. Assume the other side will get called as well, and dismantle their arguments in your talking points.
**Don’t say “No comment”**
Think about how you react when you hear someone on the news say, “No comment.” Most often, it leaves the impression that someone is hiding information from the public. On the other hand, bluffing your way through a question will damage your credibility. Answer the question honestly and repeat your message.

**You’re always “on the record”**
Nothing you say is EVER off the record. If you prefer to talk to a reporter to provide information on background and don’t wish to be quoted, make sure you have that understanding BEFORE you begin your conversation. Even then, be aware that your words still are not “off the record” and may be used in a story. The “juicier” the details, the more likely it will make the news.

**In your own words.**
Don’t let the reporter put words in your mouth. If a reporter asks, “Do you mean to say …,” state your message again, but in your own words. Similarly, don’t fall for the “Isn’t it true that” line of questioning, which aims to put you on the defensive. Don’t start with “no” or act flustered. Merely correct the record and transition (or bridge, see below) to one of your main messages.

**Stay positive and solutions-oriented**
Reporters are inclined to highlight conflict, and they want you to help them reach that objective.

**TECHNIQUES FOR STAYING ON MESSAGE**
When you find yourself in a sticky spot or perhaps straying off the subject, bring the focus back to your key points. Here are some friendly, subtle methods:

**The Bridge** – Answer the reporter’s question in a very brief and concise manner but then use the opportunity to bridge or segue to your key points. Some popular bridges include:

- “I don’t have all the facts to answer that question accurately, but I can tell you that…”
- “That used to be important. What’s important now is…”
- “I agree we have a problem and I’d like to go directly to our solution…”
- “Your question points out a common misconception we hear all the time. The real problem is…”

**The Hook** – Entice the reporter or producer to ask a desired follow-up question. Some easy hooks are studies or research. For example, “You’d be surprised what our research indicates…” or “A recent study revealed that…”

**The Flag** – Help the reporter or producer remember what you want them to by pointing it out to them. Some common flagging phrases include:

- “The key point to remember is…”
• “If I could only say one thing about this, it would be...”
• “Finally...”
• “The most important thing to take away from this is...”

CONTROL YOUR BODY LANGUAGE
Your physical presence can say as much as your words—especially with television and video—so use it to your advantage. Sometimes body language or appearance can conflict with your message, making what you say appear to be suspect. Especially if you’re doing an on-camera interview, remember these tips:

• Look your interviewer in the eye to convey genuine interest.
• Smile whenever appropriate.
• In television interviews, if you must look away from the interviewer, don’t just shift your eyes, move your entire head. Focus the conversation on the interviewer and let the camera find you.
• Avoid sudden body movements. Some gesturing is appropriate to convey your enthusiasm, but avoid extreme waving or pointing.
• Keep your feet planted firmly on the floor and your knees together. Don’t cross your legs.
• If you perspire, be prepared. Wipe your brow during the interview if necessary.
• Be aware of, and avoid, any unconscious mannerisms like scratching your ear, playing with your tie, tapping your pen or rocking in your chair.

CREATE A POSITIVE VISUAL IMAGE
Humans are hard wired to respond to visuals—they catch our eyes, connect with our emotions, and increase social sharing. Use imagery and graphics to help communicate your message.

• Illustrate your key points with pictures, charts or props. Simple, interesting visuals help reporters understand your issue.
• Be aware of the surroundings for your interview. If you have a choice about interview location, suggest a place that brings your issue to life, whether that’s the inner city or a wilderness area. If they are coming to your office, remove all confidential or objectionable materials.

HANDLING HOSTILE REPORTERS
If a reporter is unfriendly towards you or writes a story you don’t agree with, stay calm and formulate a reasonable and constructive response. Do not antagonize or pick a fight with a reporter; they control the medium and the final message that makes it into print or onto the airwaves, not you.

If you are dealing directly with a reporter, take a deep breath and use one of the techniques described
above to avoid conflict and try to transition to one of your key messages. Answer the question and quickly get back to your main point and facts that back up your message. If you are responding to a negative story, consider using one of the following tactics:

- Pitch the story to another reporter or editor
- Write a letter to the editor
- Write an op-ed

Remember: It is almost never a good idea to pick a fight with a journalist. Today’s news is tomorrow’s recycling. Take the long view when considering how to approach a tricky relationship.

IF THE STORY IS IN ACCURATE OR UNFAIR
If a story comes out with factual mistakes or misquotes, do not call up and yell at a reporter. Rather, point out the mistake calmly and ask for a correction. Contact the reporter first, and engage the editor only if a major mistake has been made and the reporter refuses to acknowledge his/her responsibility for the miscommunication. Remember that even if you have a cordial relationship with a reporter, his or her job is to report the news and it may not always turn out the way you like it.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW
The best way to improve your interviewing skills is to review your performance and then make a list of what you’ll do better or differently next time. Read the coverage or view and listen to the broadcast to see how your impression of the interview matches with what the public reads, sees or hears.

Ask yourself:

- Were you on message?
- Did you get your main points across in a concise and easy to understand way?
- Did your opponents have any compelling arguments to which you need to construct a good counterpoint in the future?
2. When a Reporter Calls

**Tactics**
- Write down the reporter’s name, number and e-mail.
- Ask about the reporter’s deadline. If you are not ready or able to talk, ask for their specific questions, and commit to calling them back within their deadline. This will give you time to put your thoughts in order, and make sure you have your key messages & materials in front of you.
- Make sure you understand the questions asked of you. Ask for clarification if you don’t.
- Listen as much as you talk. Be economical with your words, and think about what you are saying and how you say it.
- Correct misinformation with facts (and references whenever possible).
- Don’t argue, but be clear about the basis for differing opinions. Be positive and solution-oriented in your responses. Reporters like to highlight conflict, and they want you to help them.
- If you want to talk to a reporter “off the record” or just provide information and not be quoted, get that agreement over the phone. Make sure you hear them say that they agree to the conditions. Remember, nothing is ever really off the record.
- Ask the reporter who else they have talked to so far (or who they plan to talk to). If possible, recommend other contacts to the reporter who share your perspective on the topic.

**Language**
- Write down the key points you want to make, and stick to them. Keep answers short, to the point, and in plain language.
- Be a teacher—help others understand your topic. Make sure the audience will understand what you say, and speak in simple, non-technical terms.
- NEVER say “no comment”. Instead, say that you are considering the information that you have.
- Use common words, not insider jargon or acronyms that only professionals understand. If you do use an acronym, define it.
- Don’t let anyone put words in your mouth. If a reporter asks, “Do you mean to say…” state your message again, in your own words.
- Reporters come back to people they can trust as good sources. Be truthful and accommodating, and you’ll go into their list of contacts.
RADIO & TELEVISION INTERVIEW TIPS

Tips on Interviewing

• Lead off with the most compelling fact, especially in a short interview.
• Keep in mind you literally have ten seconds to make your point. Formulate a few statements that fit within that timeframe.
• If the interviewer tries to get you off message, perhaps by quoting your opponent’s point of view, bridge back to your message- for example, you can say, “The real issue here is…. (your message).”
• If the interview is on tape (not live), and you stumble or are dissatisfied with your response, say something like “Let me rephrase that.”
• There’s really no such thing as “off the record.” If you know something you don’t want made public, don’t tell a reporter - you can’t take anything back.

Tips for Connecting with the Host, the Microphone and the Camera

• Use the host’s first name, unless they specify otherwise.
• In radio interviews, ask how far to sit from the microphone; then don’t move.
• Beware of an open mic – even when you think it’s off, don’t say anything you wouldn’t say if you were live. You are always “live”.
• Ask where to look at the beginning of the TV interview and then keep looking at that spot. If it is a talk-show format, you will talk to the host - not directly to camera.
• If standing, place one foot slightly in front of the other. If you place them side-to-side, you will rock and it will show on camera.
• Hand movements should be small — it is best to keep them in your lap.
• If you are sharing the stage with others, particularly opponents, be assertive. If a question is addressed to the entire panel, jump in - but always be polite.
• If on a panel, know the other panelists’ viewpoints and likely arguments. Have sound bites ready to respond to their main points.
Writing an Op-Ed

- **Tell a story.** They’re called opinion editorials for a reason – to showcase the unique viewpoint of the writer. Use the author’s personal experience starting in the first or second paragraph to make the piece authentic and grab the reader’s attention. Avoid a dry piece written in the third person that anyone could sign.
  
  ✓ Example: if the op-ed is authored by a physician, include an anecdote about how there has been an increase in asthma or allergy-related visits by children in recent months.

- **Make it timely.** To make the piece newsworthy, tie it to an issue or action that is current, such as a bill introduction or hearing, or an “awareness” day, week or month. Here are some upcoming examples:
  
  - Air Quality Awareness Week (April 28-May 2)
  - World Asthma Day (May 6)
  - International Nurses Day (May 12)
  - National Asthma & Allergy Month (May)
  - World Environment Day (June 5)
  - National Asthma Week (first week of September)

- **Keep it simple.** The most effective op-eds will follow one clear message or idea, and include 2-3 supporting points. Avoid jargon, and use simple, short sentences – most newspapers are written for an eighth grade reading level.

- **Single authors make it easier.** Since any story is told more strongly when you have one point of view, keep the op-ed to one author. In addition, most newspapers prefer a single author, unless you’ve got two VIP celebrities.

- **Close on a strong note.** Make your piece count by ending with a call to action that you’d like the reader – or elected/decision maker – to take.
Submitting an op-ed

- **Identify your target newspaper.** Think about the audience you are trying to reach and determine which newspaper they read.

- **Check editorial guidelines.** Many media outlets will only take a piece if it is exclusive so check before sending to your target paper. Also make sure your op-ed fits their other criteria, such as word count. Typically op-eds will be about 600 words. Some newspapers will request a headshot; so make sure you have one of the author ready to go.

- **Select the sender.** Op-eds are more likely to get placed if the request comes from the author as opposed to an outside party. If the author is not comfortable sending it in, it is OK to have it submitted by someone else, but it would be smart to at least copy the author to verify his or her authenticity.

- **Email op-ed editor.** Check the paper’s website to find out who the opinion/editorial editor is. Send an email to this person, pasting the op-ed directly into the email body (editors do not like receiving attachments) along with a brief note telling them why this piece is relevant and requesting that they consider running it. A follow-up call the next day is recommended.

- **Wait.** Most newspapers will email you back within one to three days if they want the piece. If you don’t hear back, you can call to check on their decision before sending it on to another outlet.

Writing a letter to the editor

- **Respond quickly.** People have short attention spans, so try to get your response out within two days of the original publication. Make sure to reference the original article and date of publication in your letter.

- **Keep it concise.** Be concise and focus on one important point. Most publications limit the length of published letters. If you can’t make your point in 100 to 250 words, you’ll lose the readers of the paper, too.

- **Use verifiable facts.** Don’t just cite other news outlets. Give them your best scientific sources.

- **But keep it simple.** Give them your best scientific sources but translate ideas into plain English for the rest of us.

- **Close on a strong note.** Again, make your piece count by ending with a call to action that you’d like the reader – or elected/decision maker – to take.
Participating in an editorial board meeting

- **Tips on meeting preparation**
  - Know the paper. Be sure you already know what stand the paper has taken on this issue and what they have written in the past. You cannot expect a paper to take a particular stand on an issue if you don’t know what the paper has already said. This research will also help you choose what angles or messengers will appeal to this paper’s editorial writer AND reporters, as reporters often participate in these meetings as well.
  - Read the paper on the day of the meeting — make sure that you read any articles on your issue or organization, because the editors certainly have.
  - Have a short practice session before the meeting, responding to potential questions.
  - Have no more than two or three other people as your “spokes-team” at the meeting.
  - Don’t expect the meeting to last more than 30 minutes, but be prepared—it may go much longer.

- **Materials to bring**
  - Bring background materials that you typically place in a press kit, such as fact sheets, statements, sign-on letters, past (relevant) releases, and names and numbers of people to contact for information. Also, bring copies of other editorials that may have been written on the issue by other papers.
WHY ARE STORIES IMPORTANT?

Studies of the brain and comprehension demonstrate that stories unlock emotions and dramatically improve both comprehension and information retention.

- Stories help us to make sense of our world.
- We relate new information to stories we already know.
- We remember stories far better than other forms of communication.

Telling a very quick story – even a couple of sentences – about a real-life example or experience can help turn your “message” into a memorable anecdote that will aid your audience in understanding, remembering, and passing on your ideas.

I. Stories Need Characters (Villains & Heroes)

To come alive, stories need threats or “villains,” and a message of hope, or “hero.” The “villain” might be a threat like climate change or power-plant pollution, disease-carrying mosquitoes, or even a disease itself. The “hero” might be the people in your audience, whose actions can reduce the risk presented by the “villain.” Or the “hero” could be the person who first helped you understand the role of climate change in human health.

II. Setting

The setting is both the time and the place where a story’s action unfolds, and it helps to ground your story, to make it real for your audience. A story involving a patient with asthma could take place in the emergency room, for example, or on a playground on a hot day. Either setting offers the opportunity to tell a story about the relationship between asthma and climate change.

III. Conflict

All compelling stories need this element, though the word “conflict” can be a bit misleading. It means that there is a challenge, or obstacle that must be overcome. This challenge can be personal, political or scientific. Call it tension. A good story is not flat or static. It has emotion.

IV. Tell Stories – Whatever Their Source

Sometimes, the best story to tell is not one you experienced personally, but one that someone else told YOU. That’s part of the power of stories – they offer a simple means of sharing information that resonates. If you’ve heard a story from a colleague, friend or family member that resonated with you, don’t be afraid to pass it along. And remember – the names can always be changed to protect the innocent!
SAMPLE OP-ED

Cleaner air makes for a cleaner bill of health.

As we see our first days of 80 degree weather, it’s clear that summer is here. We’re entering a season that, for a physician, means an increased number of heat-related visits. The elderly and the very young are especially vulnerable to heat waves during this season. As a pediatrician, I’ve been seeing more children suffering from heat-induced asthma attacks in recent years. I’m also seeing more children with allergies, and more cases of insect-borne diseases like West Nile virus and Lyme disease. And it’s only going to get worse.

Now, I’m in the business of making children feel better, but lately I feel like the odds are stacked against me, with the increasing effects of pollution and climate change. Pollution from coal-fired power plants is contaminating our air and water, and making our kids and families sick. Studies suggest that, if current emissions hold steady, excess heat-related deaths in the U.S. could climb from an average of about 700 each year currently, to between 3,000 and 5,000 per year by 2050.

Doctors commit our lives to protecting the health of our community. So when a problem like global climate disruption threatens that community, we have a responsibility to take whatever actions we can to help our patients – including supporting those leaders who are working to find solutions.

In June 2014, the US Environmental Protection Agency is expected to open a public comment period on a proposal to curb carbon emissions from existing power plants, which could significantly reduce emissions from coal-fired power plants. Reducing carbon pollution from coal-fired power plants is the best way for the U.S. to reduce the risks of climate change, because these emissions make up 40 percent of our nation’s climate pollution. The EPA’s plan to cap carbon pollution from power plants is the fastest way to make our air healthier and tackle climate disruption.

The EPA’s proposal is a great step in the right direction to reducing health risks due to pollution. With new and stronger protections, every resident can benefit equally from our country’s leadership in the fight against climate change.

*Dr. Edward Smith is currently in his eighth year as head Pediatrician at Saint Mary’s Hospital in Anytown, USA.*
RE: “Hot, Hot, and Getting Hotter” (May 3, 2014)

Dear Editor,

As a pediatrician, entering the summer season means an increase in heat-related visits. The elderly and the very young are especially vulnerable to the effects of a warmer climate. I’ve been seeing more children suffering from heat-induced asthma attacks in recent years. I’m also seeing more children with allergies, and more cases of insect-borne diseases like West Nile virus and Lyme disease. And I fear it’s only going to get worse.

Pollution from coal-fired power plants is contaminating our air and water, and making our kids and families sick. Studies suggest that, if current emissions hold steady, excess heat-related deaths in the U.S. could climb from an average of about 700 each year currently, to between 3,000 and 5,000 per year by 2050.

In June, the US Environmental Protection Agency is expected to open a public comment period on a proposal to curb carbon emissions from existing power plants, which could significantly reduce emissions from coal-fired power. The EPA’s plan to cap carbon pollution from power plants is the fastest way to make our air healthier and tackle climate disruption.

The EPA’s proposal is a great step in the right direction to reducing health risks due to pollution. With new and stronger protections, everyone can benefit equally from the fight against climate change.

Sincerely,

Dr. Edward Smith, Anytown

*Once the public comment period has begun, you may wish to hyperlink appropriate text with the URL for submitting comments to the EPA.*
SAMPLE EDITORIAL BOARD MEMO

Dear [Local Newspaper ed board],

This June, the public will have the chance to weigh in on the US Environmental Protection Agency’s proposal to curb carbon emissions from existing power plants, which could significantly reduce emissions from coal-fired power. Power plants are already required to limit emissions of toxins like mercury, arsenic and other heavy metals, but there are no limits on the amount of carbon pollution these plants can release.

Unregulated carbon pollution hurts us all because it contributes to global climate change, leading to rising temperatures, and more frequent severe weather events. Hotter weather and heavier rains are making some diseases spread faster and farther, like Lyme disease, West Nile virus, and even parasites and food poisoning. We can’t keep ourselves and our kids safe unless we tackle the carbon pollution that’s causing our climate to change.

We’re already seeing some of the impacts, in the rising cases of asthma. Particulate pollution from coal-fired power plants makes asthma worse, and so does the hotter weather that comes with climate change, which can increase levels of ozone, and allergens such as pollen. Tackling emissions from coal-fired power plants is the right solution.

I urge you to editorialize in support of the Environmental Protection Agency proposal to curb carbon emissions from existing power plants, which could significantly reduce emissions from coal-fired power.

Reducing carbon pollution from coal-fired power plants is the best way for the U.S. to reduce the risks of climate change, because these emissions make up 40 percent of our nation’s climate pollution. The EPA’s plan to cap carbon pollution from power plants is the fastest way to make our air healthier and tackle climate change.

A broad coalition from across the medical community supports this plan. It is a step in the right direction to reduce the health risks associated with carbon pollution.

Thank you,

(Signatories)

*Once the public comment period has begun, you may wish to hyperlink appropriate text with the URL for submitting comments to the EPA.*
SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA LANGUAGE

Twitter


Climate change = more asthma, allergies & more heat. Tell @EPA you support reducing carbon pollution: [http://1.usa.gov/1qYEPJb #CostofCarbon*](http://1.usa.gov/1qYEPJb #CostofCarbon*)

Increase in malaria, Lyme disease, West Nile Virus. This is the #CostofCarbon: [http://bit.ly/1t1Frlm](http://bit.ly/1t1Frlm)

Have allergies? Pollen counts to double by 2040. Longer pollen seasons, too. This is climate change & #CostofCarbon [http://bit.ly/1IBck2b](http://bit.ly/1IBck2b)

Tell @EPA you support reducing carbon pollution: [http://1.usa.gov/1qYEPJb #CostofCarbon*](http://1.usa.gov/1qYEPJb #CostofCarbon*) Help us all breathe easier.

Global increase in childhood asthma is the true #CostofCarbon. Reduce carbon pollution & help us all breathe better. [http://bit.ly/1jIj27s](http://bit.ly/1jIj27s)

Children are especially vulnerable to long term respiratory damage from air pollution. [http://t.co/p4lgENKsrW #CostofCarbon](http://t.co/p4lgENKsrW #CostofCarbon)


Climate change’s effect on seasons means more stinging & biting insects. Join the fight against #CostofCarbon [http://bit.ly/1jIj27s](http://bit.ly/1jIj27s)

Facebook

Do you have allergies? Studies show allergy and asthma seasons will only get longer due to carbon pollution. Join the fight against the #Costof Carbon and tell the EPA you support reducing harmful pollution: [http://1.usa.gov/1qYEPJb*](http://1.usa.gov/1qYEPJb*)

Children are especially vulnerable to long-term respiratory damage from air pollution. Join the fight against carbon pollution by weighing in on the EPA’s carbon reducing proposal: [http://1.usa.gov/1qYEPJb*](http://1.usa.gov/1qYEPJb*)


*Once the public comment period has begun, you may wish to replace this link with the URL for submitting those comments.
Participating in a meeting with policymakers, elected officials, or agency administrators

*Tips to prepare for the meeting*

✓ Research and learn about **what the policymaker, elected official or agency cares about**. What initiatives, bills, or programs have they endorsed or enacted? Having a good understanding of their interests will provide you a better roadmap to communicate on your issue.

✓ Research and read any **recent press in which the policymaker, elected official or agency has been cited** or quoted. Reading their own words can be very helpful in understanding their concerns and interests.

✓ Learn **what their constituents care about**. Reviewing local media coverage can help illuminate the issues that matter to a local community, as well as identifying which other stakeholders (business owners? Industrial associations? Church or community leaders?) have been speaking out about your issue or similar issues.

✓ If possible, **bring additional local constituents to the meeting**. Including other members of the community, or other similarly-minded stakeholders, who bring additional perspectives on the issues you all care about.

✓ Bring **evidence to explain why your issue should matter** to them and impact their work. Emphasize personal stories that illustrate the importance of the issue to you, and to the particular decisionmaker with whom you’re meeting. And bring facts and figures that support your stories, and help you make the case.
April 16, 2014

Air and Radiation Docket and Information Center
Environmental Protection Agency
Mail Code: 2822 T
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC  20460

Re: Docket ID# EPA-HQ-OAR-2013-0495

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the EPA:

As medical and health professionals who work and live in North Carolina, we are writing to express our strong support of the EPA’s proposed limits on carbon emissions from new and existing power plants.

Medical Advocates for Healthy Air (MAHA) members are extremely concerned about the expected human health impacts resulting from climate change which is directly affected by the level of carbon emissions in the atmosphere. The expected negative health consequences of climate change have been well studied and are manifold. According to the World Health Organization, these consequences include but are not limited to increased malnutrition and infectious diseases, heat stress, respiratory disease, reproductive and developmental disorders, cancer, physical and psychological trauma from extreme weather disasters and increases in insect-borne diseases.1

MAHA members are especially interested in the health of North Carolina’s children. Our state data currently indicates more than 195,000 diagnoses of pediatric asthma, a disease known to be exacerbated by poor air quality which is directly and indirectly associated with high levels of carbon emissions. Worldwide, more than 88% of the existing global burden of disease due to climate change occurs in children less than five years old, particularly those of low socioeconomic status. Effects of climate change have already taken a significant toll on children and are predicted to increase dramatically—unless action is taken.

Last fall at the Research Triangle Environmental Health Collaborative’s Summit “Climate Change and Public Health: Moving North Carolina Forward”, participants agreed that more support was needed for state, national, and international policies which reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Since emissions from power plants account for 40% of national CO₂ emissions, we believe it’s critical the federal government take action to limit carbon emissions from power plants for the health of our children and all North Carolinians. We urge the EPA to adopt standards that result in maximum benefits for public health.

Sincerely,

[Date]

[Name of Recipient]
[Address of Recipient]

Re: [Docket ID# if applicable]

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the [Agency Name, State Office, or Elected Official]:

As medical and health professionals who work and live in [Name of State or Municipality], we are writing to express our strong support of the EPA’s proposed limits on carbon emissions from new and existing power plants.

[Organization Name or Group of Advocates] are extremely concerned about the human health impacts resulting from climate change which is directly affected by the level of carbon emissions in the atmosphere. The expected negative health consequences of climate change have been well studied and are manifold. According to the World Health Organization, these consequences include but are not limited to increased malnutrition and infectious diseases, heat stress, respiratory disease, reproductive and developmental disorders, cancer, physical and psychological trauma from extreme weather disasters and increases in insect-borne diseases.¹

[Organization Name or Group of Advocates] members are especially interested in the health of [Name of State or Municipality]’s children. Our state data currently indicates more than [195,000] diagnoses of pediatric asthma, a disease known to be exacerbated by poor air quality which is directly and indirectly associated with high levels of carbon emissions. Worldwide, more than 88% of the existing global burden of disease due to climate change occurs in children less than five years old, particularly those of low socioeconomic status. Effects of climate change have already taken a significant toll on children and are predicted to increase dramatically—unless action is taken.

Last fall at the [Mention of Regional or Local Summit and Report if available, e.g.: Research Triangle Environmental Health Collaborative’s Summit “Climate Change and Public Health”], participants agreed that more support was needed for state, national, and international policies which reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Since emissions from power plants account for 40% of national CO2 emissions, we believe it’s critical the federal government take action to limit carbon emissions from power plants for the health of our children and all [North Carolinians]. We urge the [Agency Name, State Office, or Elected Official] to support standards that result in maximum benefits for public health.

Sincerely,

## Editorial Calendar

**Awareness Days, Weeks & Months**

The following is a calendar of events for possible health focused messaging and outreach on climate change and power plant pollution. Additional awareness dates may be available locally, on a community- or state-wide basis.

### 2014 Calendar Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 30, 2014</td>
<td>American Lung Association State of Air Report released</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 5, 2014</td>
<td>World Asthma Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 6, 2014</td>
<td>National Climate Assessment released</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2014</td>
<td>National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clean Air Month</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 1st week</td>
<td>National Asthma Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2014</td>
<td>Healthy Lungs Month</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Child Health Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 4, 2014</td>
<td>National Child Health Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 27, 2014</td>
<td>National Lung Health Day</td>
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</table>

### 2015 Calendar Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 2015</td>
<td>National Heart Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2nd week</td>
<td>Cardiovascular Professionals’ Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 7, 2015</td>
<td>World Health Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2nd week</td>
<td>Public Health Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 22, 2015</td>
<td>Earth Day (and Earth Week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 28-May 2, 2015</td>
<td>Air Quality Awareness Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 30, 2015</td>
<td>ALA State of the Air Report</td>
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