

Climate Change is a Public Health Emergency

Gary Pace, MD, Lake County Health Department, remedioshealing@gmail.com

Project Description: Due to the worsening climate crisis and the need for important leverage points at the state level to rapidly bring about changes in policy, I wanted to engage the California Dept. of Public Health and local County Health Officers in addressing the health impacts of climate change.

Outcome - Oriented Objective: This project was more policy and strategy based. Objectives were to educate stakeholders, identify allies, develop specific goals and strategic pathways, identify funding sources, and create a long-term plan to continue forward after the end of the fellowship.

Solution:

- Initial
 - Set up trainings with state and local PH leaders starting March 2020. Included large training September 2019.
 - Create a pathway for legislation and specific actions-- through Environmental Health Committee.
 - Consider setting up a budget ask for 2021.
- Pivot: Comes to a screeching halt with COVID in March 2020.
- Ultimate outcome: I am needing to find another venue to do this work in. While there is may be potential in Public Health, they are unable to focus now.

Climate Change is a Public Health Emergency

Gary Pace, MD, Lake County Health Department, remedioshealing@gmail.com

Result

- I started this project on March 2019 and we are now at the reassessing phase.
- Data is really more of a chronicle of the strategy and the milestones met.

Next Steps

- This project is on hold.
- The ultimate goal is to engage public health officials in the decision-making at the state level that can influence GHG emissions, mitigation, adaptation, and preparations for disasters.
- I plan to look for a different venue to pick up the same issues.
- Once I find the venue, more funding will be needed.
- By 6/2021, i hope to have left my current setting and have found the next arena to work on this.

Lessons Learned

- I did not achieve the goals I had hoped for.
- I think it is not possible to bring about the changes I had hoped for in this organization, especially given the current crises.
 - Personal relationship help to get a lot done.
 - Work with legislators can be effective, and they want to hear from us.
 - There is a strategic framework that can be developed for policy/political change.
 - As a leader, it is important to leave people with hope, even in discouraging circumstances. Developing pathways for relevant action is an important component of hope and empowerment.