

Climate and Health Equity Coalition

April 16, 2025, 2025 | 10:30am - 12:00pm

Meeting Minutes

Members present: Melia Allan, Hannah Beath, Devin Brown, James Carl, Deanna D'Amore, Robert Dubrow, Diane Mas, Madhumitha Mathivanan, Edgardo Mejias, Mark Mitchell, Katharine Morris, Jenna Nicol, Michael Pascucilla, Edith Pestana, Kate Richard, Elizabeth Rivera-Rodriguez, Lawrence Young, Jennifer Wang.

Welcome and Icebreaker

- Hannah Beath called the meeting to order at 10:33am.
- Hannah led the group through introductions and an icebreaker about staying grounded, small wins, and taking care of our well-being.

Symposium Update

- Jennifer Wang updated the group on the Climate Change and Health Equity Symposium, which was postponed from March to a target date of early September.
 - Options for dates: Tuesday 9/2, Friday 9/5, Monday 9/8, Tuesday 9/9, Wednesday 9/10.
- Jennifer shared three plans:
 - Plan A: Adanti Student Center at SCSU
 - Plan B: Sterling Memorial Library at Yale
 - Plan C: virtual only

Heat Module Walkthrough

- Madhu Mathivanan walked through the Extreme Heat Module for Local Health Departments in Connecticut to gather feedback from Coalition members.
- Hannah asked if Local Health Departments could share information on the heat tools they currently use
- Mark Mitchell gave feedback about the relationship between deaths and illness and heat. He also brought up involving communities to find out whether the community would actually utilize the places recommended.
 - Katharine also commented on cooling centers, recommending the inclusion of information on which centers allow animals.
- Katharine Morris suggested extending or clarifying the list of medications that make individuals more vulnerable to the heat. She also suggested involving pharmacies so they could promote this information in tandem with the module.
- Diane Mas shared feedback on the long-term intervention slide, suggesting a crosswalk of different resilience objectives. She also brought up the challenge of getting access to relief at night.

- Mark Mitchell shared information on New York City’s “Be a Buddy” program, for people to check on those who are most vulnerable to extreme heat.

Heat and Air Quality Toolkit

- Jennifer shared the resources in Yale’s Heat and Air Quality Toolkit, which was first launched in December 2024.
- Edith Pestana shared feedback on including similar resources to the Heat toolkit and curriculum on extreme storm events and flooding.
- Michael Pascucilla suggested opening the symposium beyond public health, to preparedness directors, building departments, and others. The group shared additional preparedness resources that the team can look into.

Community Spotlights

DEEP – Edith Pestana

- Edith gave a brief history of environmental justice (EJ) law in Connecticut. She also shared a map of the EJ communities in the state with dots labeling the affecting facilities.
- Edith spoke of the importance of looking at cumulative impacts to EJ communities.
- She shared the following link: <https://portal.ct.gov/deep/environmental-justice/environmental-justice-law-regulations-development>

CHPCA – Mark Mitchell

- Mark Mitchell, at Connecticut Health Professionals for Climate Action (CHPCA) shared that talking about the major health effects of climate is one of the most effective ways of getting people to act on climate and adopt policies.
- CHPCA was formed to help health professionals learn about the health effects of climate change; they have virtual training sessions around every other month.
- This year, CHPCA is having their first conference on October 18, at Hartford Hospital.
- For more information on CHPCA, visit their website: <https://www.connecticuthpca.org/>

Wrap up and Next Steps

- Jennifer shared a Yale-sponsored virtual event on Monday, April 21, 2025 from 1:30-2:30pm, featuring Alejandra Borunda, a climate and health reporter at NPR.
- The meeting adjourned at 11:59am.
- Next Coalition meeting: July 16, 2025.