

CT Climate and Health Equity Coalition

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

Meeting Minutes

Members present: Melia Allan, Nandini Arora, Hannah Beath, Ryan Borg, Ruth Canovi, Kathy Fay, Christine Gacek, Diane Mas, Mark Mitchell, Sheena Pinnock, Kate Richard, Elizabeth Rivera-Rodriguez, Jonna Thomas, Jennifer Wang, Corona Zhang.

Welcome and Icebreaker

- Hannah Beath called the meeting to order at 10:34am.
- Members shared moments related to nature and climate that brought them hope, joy, or resiliency.

Announcements

- Hannah updated the group on BRACE funding from the CDC and the uncertainty on the federal level. She also gave updates on staffing in DPH, and on the development of an Adaptation and Resilience Fellowship, in partnership with Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU).
 - The fellowship is a two-year position funded through DPH and hired through SCSU, when the posting goes up, Hannah will share information with the coalition to promote the program.

Symposium Update and Agenda Feedback

- Jennifer Wang updated the group on the 2025 Symposium on Climate Change and Health, scheduled for Wednesday, September 10, 2025, from 8:30am to 2:30pm. September 10th was one of the dates discussed at the April meeting, and Jennifer emphasized that the event needed to be kept low cost, which influenced decisions on the Yale side.
- The event will be free and open to the public, hosted in-person at the Sterling Memorial Library on Yale's Campus, with a virtual option available. The symposium's objective is to build awareness, engagement, and community in Connecticut around the health impacts of climate change and solutions to protect public health.
- Jennifer presented on the proposed agenda for the symposium, soliciting feedback from coalition members. Feedback included but was not limited to the following ideas:

- Mark Mitchell recommended extending the time for the afternoon sessions from five minutes to ten minutes, to enable sufficient presentation and discussion time.
- Diane Mas brought up the idea of splitting the 11:00am session into two panels followed by breakout discussions; Mark Mitchell supported this idea.
- Hannah brought up finding organizations doing outreach work with outdoor workers; members shared recommendations including Community Health Center Inc, the National Center for Farmworker Health, and groups seeking to ban gas-powered leaf blowers.
- Christine Gacek made a suggestion about including a segment on the health impact of substance use in extreme heat.
- The group discussed resource sharing with symposium, through handouts, slide sharing, and/or an online resource repository.
- YCCCH and DPH will share the registration link for the symposium as soon as possible.

Open Discussion

- Kathy Fay shared that on July 24th, she is hosting an event in conjunction with the State Energy Efficiency Board.
- Ruth Canovi emphasized the need to make a connection between events happening in the news to the impacts of climate change now. Often, the general public views climate change as a phenomenon that will happen in the future, rather than linking climate change to the extreme weather events occurring today.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

- Depending on the status of the BRACE grant, the next meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 15, 2025. DPH will be in contact with group members as more information becomes available.
- The meeting adjourned at 11:42am.