



IANPHI Climate Change and Public Health Thematic Committee Statement on the role of National Public Health Institutes in addressing human health impacts from extreme heat

IANPHI recognizes that extreme heat events and rising temperatures, aggravated by climate change, affect public health in wide ranging ways. Acute and chronic exposure to heat exacerbates a range of chronic diseases and can cause heat stroke, adverse birth and mental health outcomes. Higher average temperatures are linked to an increase in disease patterns of vector-borne, water-borne, and food-borne diseases. In addition, it affects the wellbeing of communities by disrupting ecosystems, impacting food production and global supply, decreasing labor productivity, straining energy supply, and directly burdening health systems. The increasing frequency of compounding hazards where heat events co-occur with air pollution, wildfire, drought and extreme weather events poses additional risk to public health.

Extreme heat presents a significant health risk for the whole population, but certain groups are particularly vulnerable due to individual risk factors or increased exposure, such as children, pregnant and older people, those with disabilities or long-term care needs, people with chronic conditions, and workers in heat-stressed indoor and outdoor environments. The health impacts are disproportionately worse in communities experiencing (historical) environmental injustice and health inequalities.

The IANPHI Roadmap on Action for Health and Climate Change recognizes the vital role of National Public Health Institutes (NPHIs) to monitor, respond, and protect public health from these adverse impacts. To this end, NPHIs need to mobilize essential public health functions related to conducting heat health surveillance, implementing preventive actions, informing the general and vulnerable populations, and promoting policy-relevant research on the health impacts from heat. These activities align with the 'all hazards' approach in the International Health Regulations that require detecting, assessing, reporting and responding to climate-related health threats posed by increasing frequency, duration and intensity of heat exposure.

To meet this challenge, IANPHI calls upon its members and partners to:

- Elevate the national priority around prevention of health harms from heat by allocating sufficient human and financial resources for NPHIs towards monitoring and prevention.

- Build capacity among NPHIs to conduct routine tracking of heat-related health outcomes at spatial and temporal scales that can inform near real-time heat response and longer-term heat resilience planning.
- Develop partnerships between NPHIs and national meteorological services and research institutes for timely sharing of actionable data to implement impact-based heat health warning systems and prevention strategies from local to national scales.
- Contribute to the global dissemination of resources through the IANPHI Committee on Climate Change and Public Health as the focal point on these topics:
 - Heat exposure information appropriate for different regions and populations
 - Epidemiologic analyses of heat health impacts
 - Heat health vulnerability assessments
 - Design of geospatial tools sharing heat health data
 - Health indicators related to heat
 - Risk communication
- Partner with health systems and healthcare providers to develop heat health management protocols, strengthen clinical preparedness during heat events, and expand patient education around heat illness prevention.
- Collaborate with stakeholders in the community and local government for the design and implementation of heat health action plans.
- Engage with national partners to highlight the health co-benefits of heat-related policies in housing, energy, urban planning, agriculture and other sectors.
- Lead the integration of heat health resilience strategies into national climate action planning in alignment with international initiatives like the United Nation Extreme Heat Risk Governance Framework.
- Ensure NPHI participation in global initiatives such as, but not restricted to, the Global Heat Health Information Network (GHHIN) and Alliance for Action on Climate Change and Health (ATAACH) for knowledge sharing.

IANPHI recognizes that to protect public health from the impacts of heat exposure, the actions listed above must be supported by investments to improve population health by reducing poverty and improving social determinants of health, and effective climate change mitigation and adaptation policies, including promoting nature-based solutions, increasing decarbonization of the healthcare sector, accelerating the transition to green energy, and the safeguarding of ecosystems through biodiversity protection and regeneration.