

## US & UK National Medical Academies Commit to Action on Climate Change & Call for Action by World Health Leaders

The National Academy of Medicine (NAM) in the United States and the Academy of Medical Sciences (UK Academy) in the United Kingdom jointly commit to bringing their leadership and influence to bear in responding to the climate emergency. The NAM and UK Academy are calling on peers in medical and science academies, the public health and health care communities to become more active participants in ensuring that health impacts are central to national and international climate policy discussions.

During a July 2022 [joint symposium on climate change and global public health](#), the two Academies committed to sustained and coordinated action in six key areas:

- **Communicating the health co-benefits and risks of climate interventions.** Climate-driven events such as extreme weather, pollution, food and water shortages, and infectious disease outbreaks have negative and costly impacts on health. These are issues that were covered in the UK Academy's 2021 report entitled '[A Healthy Future - tackling climate change and health mitigation together](#)' in partnership with the Royal Society. In addition, certain measures to reduce carbon emissions within the food and transportation sectors have significant health co-benefits. The NAM and UK Academy pledged to engage with policy makers and industry leaders to ensure that positive as well as negative health impacts are considered in climate-related decision making and by proxy intervention design.
- **Elevating discussions and supporting actions to decarbonise the health sector.** In order to be credible leaders and messengers with regard to health impacts of climate change and related interventions, the Academies agreed that measures to reduce the carbon footprint of the health care community/sector are critical. Initial work in this area includes the NAM's [Action Collaborative on Decarbonizing the US Health Sector](#) (Climate Collaborative), which convenes public and private actors to commit to shared targets for emissions and waste reduction, with workstreams in health care delivery, the health care supply chain, health professional education; and policy, financing, and metrics.
- **Innovation and entrepreneurship at the intersection of climate and health equity.** The UK Academy and NAM agreed that fostering the market for technological innovation and venture capitalism could accelerate progress toward net-zero health care as well as yield breakthrough solutions in the areas of mitigation and adaptation. Through its [Grand Challenge on Climate Change, Human Health, and Equity](#), the NAM will explore mechanisms, such as an innovation competition, to accelerate novel solutions at the climate, health, and equity nexus. The UK Academy is a member of the [UK Health Alliance on Climate Change \(UKHACC\)](#) that brings together health professionals who advocate for just climate solutions and promoting the health benefits of such responses in the UK framework.

- **Engaging early-career researchers and policy leaders.** As those most impacted by climate change, young people are essential to the success of communication, mitigation, and adaptation strategies. The NAM and UK Academy pledged to engage more deeply with youth and early-career individuals, leveraging existing programs such as the [NAM's Emerging Leaders in Health and Medicine](#) and the [UK Young Academy](#).
- **Fostering a more equitable, systems approach to the climate challenge.** Acknowledging the complexities of implementing mitigation and adaptation strategies and health, the Academies pledged to advance discussions of a holistic systems approach to policy making. This approach would ideally consider the interests and concerns of diverse stakeholders both within and outside the health sector. Further, the Academies committed to maintaining a focus on equity, as those most impacted by climate change are also the most disadvantaged.
- **Developing shared metrics for progress.** The Academies agreed there was a need to develop shared metrics and reporting systems specific to the intersection of climate change, health, and mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Finally, the NAM and UK Academy reiterated the need for bold health sector leadership on the international stage and urged peer academies in other nations to join their commitment to advancing the inclusion of health in climate discussions at all levels of policymaking. As organisations representing leaders within health care, biomedical research, education, and public health, medical academies and their umbrella organisations (such as the InterAcademy Partnership) have a unique opportunity, sitting at the crossroads of academia, industry and government to influence policy, practice, and culture – and thereby help to protect the health of current and future generations.