Stanford MEDICINE

Stanford Medicine Climate Resilience Plan Executive Summary

Climate change poses many threats to the health and well-being of our community members, from increasing the risk of extreme weather events such as high heat and heavy storms to increasing the risk of respiratory issues and changing the spread of certain diseases carried by everyday insects. As one of the most significant contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, the health sector has an important role to play in addressing this threat. As a pioneer and innovator responsible for society's most important medical and technological advances, Stanford Medicine is committed to promoting the health and well-being of the people and communities we serve while safeguarding the environment for future generations. In line with our mission to heal humanity through science and compassion, and our commitment to carbon neutrality, Stanford Medicine has developed a Climate Resilience Plan to detail the plans we have in place to ensure continuity of care and continuous operations in light of changing climate, and our efforts to support those communities most impacted by those changes.

Climate Resilience is defined as the capacity to **prepare for, respond to**, and **recover from** the impacts of hazardous climate events. This process begins with understanding the risks associated with climate related events, along with the impacts that those risks could have on our operations and the community we serve. These identified risks are then woven into our emergency preparedness efforts, community outreach and planning, and our operational plans. Our climate resilience plan addresses the following key elements:

- Prospective Risk Assessment
- Health Equity and Community Engagement
- Assessment and Remediation in Infrastructure and Operations
- Collaboration Between Healthcare organizations Engagement

Prospective Risk Assessment

Our annual hazard vulnerability assessment process, led by our Office of Emergency Management, evaluates the frequency, probability, severity and level of preparedness for incidents that may impact our organization's ability to provide safe, quality patient care. In past years, we have looked at the number of times each of those events has occurred over the past year as the way to measure the frequency. Beginning in 2024, and moving forward, we will be incorporating forward looking climate risk assessment to determine the future anticipated frequency of weather-related events and using that information as part of our frequency determination.

The following climate related risks have been identified as impactful to our service areas.

- Extreme temperature
- Wildfire and associated air quality impacts
- Heavy rain- Flood and landslide risks
- Sea level rise and Tsunami

Health Equity and Community Engagement

Stanford Medicine is committed to improving the health of our community. As part of that commitment, we provide health care to some of our community's most vulnerable members, and partner with local government and community-based organizations to improve the health of our community members. Our mission to address health care disparities is driven by a committee of leaders, faculty, and staff from all entities within Stanford Medicine. Climate related events disproportionately impact marginalized communities, and individuals with existing health conditions may be more vulnerable during climate related emergencies. As our organizations continue to increase our screening for unmet health-related social needs and medical vulnerabilities, we are looking to create connections between these patients and community resources that can support them. Examples of this include providing information to our patients on how to prepare for and respond to events such as high heat or poor air quality days.

Assessment and Remediation in Infrastructure and Operations

A critical element of our resilience planning is the processes we have in place to assess the vulnerabilities within our buildings, operations, and supporting infrastructure (such as utilities and roads). When vulnerabilities are identified, they can be integrated into short term maintenance operations or long-term capital planning for remediation. Specific areas we are addressing include assessing our buildings for vulnerability to climate risks, evaluating our energy systems, integrating climate risk into land use decisions, ensuring we have adequate water sanitization, evaluating our transportation network, and making our supply chain more resilient. As these efforts continue within our organization, we will integrate future climate risk as an element of consideration.

Collaboration Between Healthcare organizations

Stanford Medicine Emergency Management teams actively participate and have held voluntary leadership positions in a number of local, regional, and national healthcare collaborations. Sharing the academic medical center's drive for exploration and innovation, the Emergency Management teams – including their physician medical directors – also participate in several national committees to advance the field. Our transfer centers work collaboratively on a daily basis with other area hospitals to help place patients who need specialized care or where space is not available to provide treatment for those patients. This network has been utilized in wildfire events, local patient surge events, and in situations where local emergencies have impacted access to another regional hospital. This same collaboration can be utilized when our health system is impacted and needs to find care for our patient populations.

Moving Forward and Next Steps

In our ongoing commitment to supporting the communities we serve we have identified three principal areas to continue integrating climate resilience into our planning and operations:

In our **Emergency Preparedness planning**, we will continue to utilize a prospective risk assessment during our annual Hazard Vulnerability Analysis process. This will help inform our overall preparedness activities and prioritize resources for additional planning.

As part of our ongoing **community partnership and outreach** processes, we will continue to integrate climate and environment in our Community Health Needs Assessment process, develop communication pathways to help inform our patients on how to better prepare for climate related events, and help connect our vulnerable patient populations to additional resources that can assist them during climate events.

For our **buildings and infrastructure**, we will be exploring additional tools and resources to help better understand the vulnerabilities within our facilities and utility infrastructure. These same considerations will be integrated into future facility siting and planning so that we can better understand and mitigate risks related to climate events.