



# **PUBLIC HEALTH**

**ALWAYS WORKING FOR A SAFER AND  
HEALTHIER WASHINGTON**

“A Regional Health Perspective on Climate Change”

Washington State Department of Health

Gregg Grunenfelder, Deputy Secretary

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## Climate Adaptation Efforts in Washington

- November 2007 – Climate Change & Human Health
  - University of Washington and Washington State Department of Health
- 2009 State Agency Climate Leadership Act (SB5560)
  - Agriculture
  - Commerce
  - Ecology
  - Fish & Wildlife
  - Health
  - Natural Resources
  - Transportation

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## A Topic of High Interest & Engagement

- SB5560 – Topic Advisory Group on Human Health & Security
  - University of Washington; Washington State Department of Health
  - Ecology
  - Washington Emergency Management
  - Local Health
  - League of Women Voters
  - Physicians for Social Responsibility
  - NW Center for Public Health Practice
  - American Lung Association in Washington

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## Climate Issues & Trends

- Warming Temperatures
  - Puget Sound average annual temperatures increased 2.3F during the 20<sup>th</sup> century
  - All models predict continued warming in the NW
    - 2.0F by 2020s
    - 3.2F by 2040s
    - 5.3F by 2080s

## Climate Issues & Trends

- Drier summers & wetter winters (less snow)
  - Annual precipitation in NW increased 12.9% 1920-2000
  - Average snowpack has reduced 25% in much of the Cascades since 1950s
  - Projections for:
    - Decreased summer precipitation
    - Increased winter precipitation (avg. 9% by 2080s)
    - Continued decreases in snowpack (53-65% by 2080s)



## Health Implications of Climate Change

- Health effects of excessive heat
- Health effects of air pollution
- Health effects associated with infectious diseases
- Health effects of extreme weather events & rising sea levels
- Psychological & social disruption



## Current Activities in Washington

- University of Washington – projections on impacts of excessive heat
- Public Health Seattle & King County
  - Countywide climate change team (adaptation & mitigation)
  - Healthy community planning/Transportation planning
- Clark County Public Health
  - County comprehensive plan update – health element (inclusive of climate change issues)

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## Washington Integrated Climate Change Response Strategy (draft out later in 2012)

- Observed Trends & Future Projections
- Human Health
- Ecosystems, Species and Habitats
- Coasts and Oceans
- Water
- Agriculture
- Forests
- Infrastructure



## Reshaping Public Health – Agenda for Change

- Communicable disease and other health threats
- Healthy communities and environments
- Public health partnering with the healthcare system

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**Essential / Categorical Program Funding**

**Maternal and Child Health**

**Injury Control**

**Communicable Disease Control**

**Chronic Disease Prevention**

**Environmental Health**

**Across all Programs**

## **Fundamental Capabilities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Public Health**

- Information Systems and Resources, including surveillance and epidemiology
- Health planning (including community health improvement planning)
- Partnership development, community mobilization
- Policy development, analysis, decision support
- Communications (including health literacy/cultural competency)
- Public health research, evaluation, and quality improvement
- Emergency Preparedness and Response



## **Actions for Washington Department of Health**

- Define & articulate the core capacity of public health
- Pursue long-term sustainable funding strategy
- Build climate change awareness and understanding into the system

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