



Massachusetts General Hospital

Founding Member, Mass General Brigham

Center for the Environment and Health

Working to integrate sustainability into clinical, research, and educational activities, and to improve the environmental health and well-being of the hospital and our communities

Fall 2024



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MGB Submits to Carbon Disclosure Project

In October, MGB continued to be the first U.S. academic medical center to submit data to the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), a not-for-profit organization that collects carbon emission data from companies, cities, states and regions and helps manage their environmental impacts. CDP is widely regarded as the gold standard for environmental reporting with the richest and most comprehensive dataset on corporate and city action. Reporting data to CDP will allow MGB to receive a sustainability score, identify areas for improvement, and provide an example for other academic medical centers. The report will be publicly available once released by CDP.



MGH Reduces Environmental Impact of Anesthetic Gases

Anesthetic gases used in healthcare can have serious negative impacts on the environment. Some gases such as nitrous oxide have a global warming impact hundreds of times higher than a similar amount of carbon dioxide. Piping systems in hospitals designed to provide nitrous oxide to patients can leak this gas directly into the atmosphere. To reduce these leaks, MGH has recently shifted nitrous oxide delivery to cylinders placed directly in patient rooms. This change is expected to substantially reduce the environmental impact of anesthetic gases at



MGH.

Click [here](#) to see more information about anesthetic gases at MGH.

Upcoming Events

Our Planet, Our Health: 2025 Climate Action Convention March 1-4, 2025



In March 2025, the Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health in collaboration with a number of other climate and health leaders is organizing one of the largest events ever focused on planetary health and climate action. Hosted at the National Academy of Sciences building in Washington, DC, this gathering will bring together leaders, experts, and advocates committed to driving progress toward a healthier, more sustainable, and just future. Speaker applications are currently being accepted across a range of session topics.

Click [here](#) for more information.

Webinar on the Clinician Role in Health System Decarbonization November 19, 2024



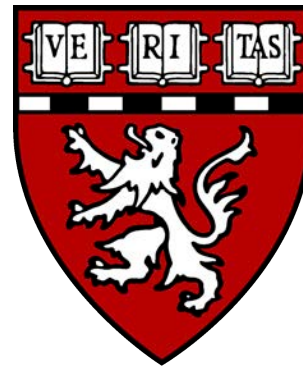
As part of their Bending the Climate Curve webinar series, Mazzetti is organizing a free webinar on the role of clinicians in leading the conversation on decarbonization on November 19 at 11am (ET). The webinar will focus on the specific opportunities clinicians have to move health system decarbonization forward and includes the participation of CEH director Jonathan Slutzman.

Click [here](#) to learn more about this webinar and to register.

Trainees

Climate Change, Environment and Health Curriculum

The Climate Change, Environment and Health (CCEH) curricular track led by Students for Environmental Action in Medicine (Harvard Medical School) and Gaurab Basu at Harvard Medical school continues to grow. The current M1 class is the second cohort of medical students to follow the new curriculum. Recent additions include a workshop on healthcare sustainability, information on the climate susceptibility of children, and a review of environmental toxins. [Preliminary evaluation](#) and a recent [publication](#) have demonstrated the effectiveness of the CCEH and additional work is planned to broaden and deepen the scope of climate and health teaching at Harvard Medical School.



MGB Climate Change and Health Interest Group

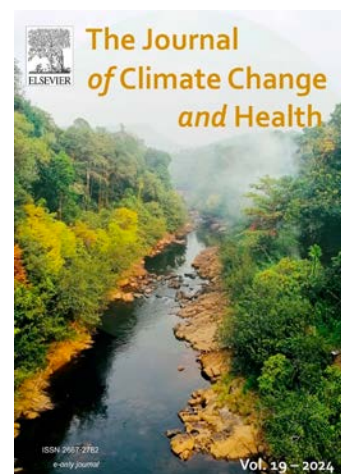
On Nov. 1 a group of MGH and BWH trainees held their inaugural meeting of the MGB Climate Change and Health Interest Group. The group is open to all trainee specialties across MGB and will advocate for changes in hospital practices, patient care, curricula, and policies in order to educate our patient and staff about the health effects of climate change, reduce the environmental pollution of the healthcare system, and protect our communities. The group is currently planning additional events.

To find out more and register for the group click [here](#).

Research

New Climate Literature by Medical Specialty

The Journal of Climate Change and Health, a free open-access journal, has now published a series of articles in its Virtual Special Issue on Climate and Health Through a Health Specialty-Focused Lens. This collection details how climate change is affecting the patients seen by practitioners in a wide variety of different medical and surgical specialties globally through systematic scoping reviews of the peer-reviewed and grey literature. Specialties providing scoping reviews include Emergency Medicine, Neurology, Pediatrics, Ophthalmology, Rheumatology, Surgery and Surgical Specialties, Respiratory Care, Anesthesiology, Cardiovascular Medicine, Allergy and Immunology, Hospice and Palliative Care, and Mental Health. Several additional specialty-based scoping reviews including Infectious Disease, Oncology, Reproductive Health, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Primary Care, and others are in process.



Click [here](#) to access this series.

Advocacy

Help Protect Workers From Extreme Heat

In July, the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) released proposed standards to better protect workers from extreme heat in both indoor and outdoor settings. Health professionals can be powerful messengers about the health risks of heat; learn more and considering adding your support for swift finalization and implementation of the new standards [here](#).



Open Letter for AstraZeneca

The Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility group is seeking signatures for an open letter to AstraZeneca to bring Symbicort Turbuhaler to the U.S. market. This dry powder form of Symbicort (budesonide-formoterol) is the formulation used in many of the asthma trials, and is readily available in Canada, the United Kingdom, much of Europe, China and other Asian countries – but not in the U.S.



Pressurized metered dose inhalers (MDIs) are responsible for roughly 4% of our healthcare system's greenhouse gas emissions. In 2020, the greenhouse gas emissions from metered dose inhaler use in the U.S. was the equivalent of driving 500,000 cars for a year. Switching from pressurized MDIs to dry powder inhalers, when appropriate, can significantly reduce these emissions.

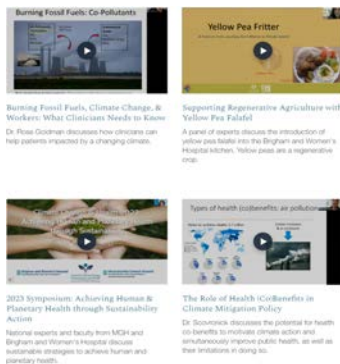
Click [here](#) to sign the letter.

Click [here](#) to learn more about this topic.

Resources

Sustainability in Healthcare Podcast

Have any colleagues who want to integrate sustainability into their health care system but don't know where to start? Refer them to our podcast [“Health Care SOS: Sharing on Sustainability”](#) – a podcast series hosted by the CEH Associate Director Wynne Armand and devoted to sharing the ways in which Mass General is integrating environmental sustainability into the clinical, research and educational activities of the hospital, and to providing tools and knowledge to support other health care institutions to do the same.



Climate and Health Webinars

The CEH has a library of climate and health webinars covering a range of topics from healthcare sustainability, to sustainable agriculture, to climate and health education for health workers. Click [here](#) to see a list of all our recorded webinars.

Publications and Media

- Armand W, Padgett M, Pinsky E, Wasfy JH, Slutzman JE, Duhaime AC. Clinician Knowledge and Attitudes About Climate Change and Health After a Quality Incentive Program. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2024 Aug 1;7(8):e2426790. doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.26790
- Boston 25 News, "Doctor explains the impact to your health from brush fire", Oct, 2025. URL: <https://www.boston25news.com/news/doctor-explains-impact-your-health-brush-fire-smoke/04a8d4b5-90f1-43a0-b849-cc3e24a1fb12/>
- Gresci L. "Doctors recommend limiting outdoor activity as smoke drifts around the state" Oct 28, 2024. 7 News Boston. <https://whdh.com/news/doctors-recommend-limiting-outdoor-activity-as-smoke-drifts-around-the-state/>
- Maher, E. "Air quality may be unhealthy for sensitive groups due to Massachusetts brush fires". Channel 5 WCVB, Oct 28, 2024. <https://www.wcvb.com/article/air-quality-may-be-unhealthy-for-sensitive-groups-due-to-massachusetts-brush-fires/62736296>
- Padgett M, Devadason A, Blom I, Molinie G, Armand W, Duhaime AC, Sherman JD, Slutzman J, Kringos D. Measuring environmentally sustainable health care: a scoping review. *Lancet Planet Health*. 2024 Sep;8(9):e675-e683. doi: 10.1016/S2542-5196(24)00162-1. PMID: 39243783.
- Palumbo A. "Dozens of brush fires smolder in Mass; open flame banned at state parks" Oct 29, 2024, NBC 10 Boston. <https://www.nbc10.com/news/local/fire-crews-still-working-to-contain-dozens-of-brush-fires-across-mass/3534253/>

- Slutzman JE, Ciardi FC, Smith SJ, Everett LL. Effectiveness of a waste volatile anaesthetic gas collection and recycling system. Br J Anaesth. 2024 Jul 31;S0007-0912(24)00421. PMID: 39089956.
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