

**April 22, 2022 – Earth Day**

Dear Leslie C. Davis, Mark Sevco, Diane Holder, Dr. Joon Y. Lee, and UPMC Executive Leadership:

We, clinicians of UPMC, are deeply concerned about the effects of climate change on the health, safety and security of the people of Pittsburgh, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and beyond.

Doctors have taken an oath: “*First, do no harm.*” We recognize our duty is to respond to the growing climate emergency not only by treating those made ill from the climate crisis and its causes, but also by mitigating our own climate impact, practicing primary prevention and joining together to advocate for a much more aggressive reduction in our own emissions.

As scientists, we recognize the evidence as unequivocal. A global increase in temperature risks catastrophic harm to human health.<sup>1</sup> Our health care systems are already experiencing the financial costs and human health burden from increased disease spread and more frequent extreme weather events. Higher temperatures cause increased cardiovascular and pulmonary morbidity and mortality, increased loss of renal function, infections, adverse mental health outcomes, and pregnancy complications.<sup>2, 3, 4, 5</sup> Climate change is also a health equity and social justice issue - its effects fall disproportionately on the most vulnerable, including children, older adults, poorer communities, and ethnic and racially minoritized groups.<sup>6-7</sup>

The U.S. health sector is responsible for an estimated 8.5% of our nation’s carbon emissions, and accounts for 25% of total global health sector emissions - by far the highest proportion attributable to any individual country’s health sector.<sup>8</sup> Emissions attributable to the US health care sector have harmful effects on public health commensurate with the mortality associated with preventable medical errors.<sup>9</sup> The healthcare industry needs a response proportional to the harm we cause.

These emissions stem directly from the operations of health care facilities (known as scope 1 emissions), indirectly from both purchased sources of energy, heating, and cooling (scope 2) and the supply chain of health care services and goods (scope 3).<sup>8</sup>

Governments, organizations, and businesses around the world are setting targets to reach zero-net emissions over the next 10-30 years.

- In 2016, Kaiser Permanente pledged to become carbon neutral and in 2020 became the first health system in the United States to achieve carbon neutral status.<sup>10</sup>
- The United Kingdom’s National Health System aims to be the first net zero national health system by 2040.
- In 2021, more than 200 medical journals worldwide simultaneously declared climate change the 'Greatest Threat to Global Public Health' and published an editorial with a call to action stating “code red” for the U.S. health sector to decarbonize.<sup>8, 11</sup>
- In 2021, the White House issued an executive order for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish the [Office of Climate Change and Health Equity](#) (OCCHE) to address the impact of climate change on the health of the American people.

HHS Assistant Secretary for Health, Rachel Levine, MD is actively pursuing collaborations with health systems to find ways to lower their greenhouse gas emissions.

- HHS participated in the 2021 United Nations Climate Conference (COP26) making specific commitments to decarbonize our health care systems, indicating a new era for our agencies and demonstrating a clear understanding of the urgency of the moment by committing to an ambitious, science-based target to halve the country's greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.<sup>12</sup>
- Following these government actions, a leadership body of 19 health systems, The U.S. [Health Care Climate Council](#), announced their support to our government's commitment to COP26. They joined the [Health Care Climate Challenge](#) and set the most ambitious greenhouse gas reduction goals in the country to protect the patients they serve from the health impacts of climate change. They have found that their strong commitments have yielded significant return on investment in terms of financial savings, employee retention and satisfaction, and improvements in patient outcomes.
- In 2021, the National Academy of Medicine launched the [Climate Action Collaborative](#) calling for the health sector to reduce its climate footprint.

UPMC is recognized as one of the nation's leading health systems and is strategically positioned to seize this opportunity for leadership and action around sustainability in health. **Actions taken now will improve population health, support environmental justice goals and save billions of dollars in health care costs.**<sup>13</sup> We have an obligation and an opportunity to lead the way in creating a climate-smart health care system and to coordinate our efforts with those of other health care sectors around the country and the world.

We recognize UPMC has taken significant steps in this direction. We have much to celebrate and build upon. And yet we believe our commitment - and that of the entire UPMC system - must be stronger. Much more must be done to urgently decarbonize our operations. We must proceed in line with our core values: Dignity & Respect, Caring and Listening, Responsibility & Integrity, Excellence, Innovation.

We ask for UPMC to commit to the following actions:

- 1. Commit to becoming a climate-smart health care system by:**
  - Joining the [Health Care Climate Challenge by signing the leadership pledge](#) supported by hospitals, health centers, and health systems across the globe.
  - Becoming a member of the [National Academy of Medicine Action Collaborative on Decarbonizing the U.S. Health Sector](#) and [Practice Greenhealth](#).
  - Joining the [Health Care Climate Council](#) along with 19 other U.S. healthcare systems.
- 2. Invest in the development of a UPMC Climate Plan by 2023 that charts a course to achieve carbon neutral status.**
- 3. Support a transition to 100% renewables (wind, solar, hydroelectric) as the source of electrical energy for UPMC operations by 2030.**
- 4. Divest UPMC's reserve portfolio from fossil fuel companies.**

- 5. Create a UPMC Climate and Health Center that brings together transdisciplinary teams to support carbon mitigation and environmental justice efforts.**
- 6. Integrate environmental quality metrics into UPMC's educational, research and operational goals.**

We know and trust that you share our concerns. Climate and human health are one - and the world is looking to health systems to help lead a multi-sectoral response. As clinicians, we are with UPMC to support these transformative environmental goals. The future of our health depends on our leadership and actions now.

We look forward to the innovation, collaboration, and progress that UPMC can demonstrate to secure a more sustainable future in Western Pennsylvania and beyond.

#### Clinicians for Climate Health Action

Noe Woods, MD – OB/GYN  
Isabela C Angelelli, MD - Pediatrics  
Gabriel Cisneros, MD - Pediatrics  
Maya Ragavan, MD - Pediatrics  
Thuy Bui, MD – Internal Medicine and Social Medicine  
Stephanie Maximous, MD, MS – Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine  
ElJamri Soukaina - Medical Student, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine  
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Helena Oft - Medical Student, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine  
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Jeyani Narayan – Medical Student, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine  
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Lee Varelas, MD – Internal Medicine  
Janet Kinnane, MD – Pediatrics  
Elena Kessler, PA – Genetic Counselor of Oncology  
Daniel Weiner, MD – Professor of Pediatrics/Pulmonology  
Sapana Shah, MD – Assistant Professor of Pediatric Gastroenterology  
Elizabeth Miller, MD – Adolescent/Young Adult Medicine  
Traci Kazmerski, MD – Assistant Professor of Pediatrics  
Evelyn Reis, MD – Professor of Pediatrics  
Kristin Hannibal, MD – Pediatrics  
Sandra McRandal, CRNP – Pediatrics  
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Meeta Mehta – Medical Student, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine  
Andre Bshara, MD – Internal Medicine  
Audrey Woerner, MD, MPH – Pediatrics, Genetic and Genomic Medicine  
Gerard Vockley, MD, PhD – Chief of Genetic and Genomic Medicine  
Lina Gonzalez, MD – Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, Genetic and Genomic Medicine  
Kelsey Schweiberger, MD, MS – Pediatrics  
Holly Thomas, MD, MS – Assistant Professor of Medicine

Ann Johansson, PhD, DNP, CRNP, FNP-BC – Genetic and Genomic Medicine  
Bruce Rollman, MD – Professor of Medicine  
Jane Liebschutz, MD, MPH, FCP – Professor of Medicine  
Andrew Klein, MD – Assistant Professor of Medicine  
Katherine Vu-Boast, MD – Assistant Professor of Pediatric Endocrinology  
Patricia Staley, MD – Pediatrics  
Shruti Sastry, MD – Pediatric Endocrinology  
Jirair Bedoyan, MD, PhD – Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Genetic and Genomic Medicine  
John Wang, MD, PhD – Pediatrics  
Alexandra Sharick, PA – Endocrinology  
Mary Vajravelu, MD – Pediatric Endocrinology  
Gerald Montano, DO – Assistant Professor of Pediatrics/Adolescent Medicine  
Amy Jean, MD – Assistant Professor of Pediatrics  
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Alison Culyba, Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine  
Brian Czervionke, MD – Pediatrics  
Keith Somers, MD - CCP/GIL, Pediatrics  
Erika Friehling, MD - Associate Professor – Pediatrics, Hematology/Oncology  
Ursula Parlin, MD - Pediatrics  
Deborah Moss, MD - Professor of Pediatrics – Pediatrics  
Dana Mueller, PA-C, IBCLC - CCP BW Pediatrics  
Ana Radovic, MD, MSc -Assistant Professor-Pediatrics/Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine  
Samuel M. Kaplan, MD - Resident / Physician - Pediatric  
Natalie Rae Evans, CPNP-PC - Pediatrics  
Brady Marburger, MD – Pediatrics  
Maura Devlin, CRNP CCP - GIL  
Catalina Hoyos, MD CCP Pediatrician – Pediatrics  
Courtney Marburger, DO - Pediatrics  
Veronica Ekeroth, CRN Hematology/Oncology  
Medha Parulekar, MD- Neurology / Pediatrics  
Kathryn Filoni, MD – Pediatrics  
A. Kim Ritchey, MD – Pediatrics  
Catherine Pressimone, Medical Student  
Rosalie Nolen, Medical Student  
Ericka Fink, MD, MS - Associate Professor/Critical Care Medicine / Pediatrics  
Jessica Garrison, MD - Pediatric Hospital Medicine  
John Szymusiak, MD, MS – Medicine and Pediatrics Pediatrics  
Matthew Valente, MD – Pediatrics  
James Shaver, MD – Pediatrics  
Erin Cummings, MD Pediatric Hospital Medicine  
Kristin Ray, MD – Pediatrics  
Raymond Pitetti, MD – Emergency Medicine, Division Chief / Pediatrics  
Urmila Tirodker, MD – Anesthesiology / Pediatrics  
Marian Michaels, MD – Infectious Disease / Pediatrics  
Lauren Lin – Medical Student  
Amani ALi Davis – Medical Student  
Hacker - Medical Student  
Moehl - Medical Student  
Dam-Bao Nguyen - Medical Student  
Sovik Roy - Medical Student

Emily  
Keelin  
Vi

Koehler Ray Wetzle Powell - Medical Student  
Camila Ortiz - Medical Student  
Rebecca Brown - Medical Student  
Mark Vincent, D'Alesio - Medical Student  
Maya Sivagnanalingam – Medical Student  
Jenny Petrone, PA – Emergency Department / Pediatrics  
Khoa Nguyen, MD – Pediatric Anesthesiology  
Nicholas Harris, MD, Fellow - Adolescent and Young Adult Health  
Kenneth Levin, MD, FAAP – Pediatrics  
Justin Schreiber, MD - Behavioral Science and General Academic Pediatrics  
Lorraine Kiger, MD – Pediatrics  
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Joshua Garfein – Medical Student  
Sarah Ehrenberg - Medical Student  
Gabrielle Gilmer- Medical Student  
Donald Bourne – Medical Student  
Rachel Wold – Medical Student  
Katie Rau, MD – Pediatric Emergency Medicine / Pediatrics  
Alicia Haupt, MD – Pediatrics  
Jason Rosesntock, MD – Psychiatry / Associate Dean for Medical Education  
Antoine Douaihy, MD – Psychiatry and Medicine  
Jessica Gannon, MD – Psychiatry  
Tushita Mayanil, MD – Psychiatry  
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Jody Glance, MD – Psychiatry  
Rohan Gangul, MD - Department Chair/Psychiatry  
Nolan Huges, MD – Psychiatry  
Sneha Rajendran, MD – Internal Medicine  
Gail Waltz, MD – Resident / Pediatrics  
Gabrielle Grace – Medical Student  
Nimit Gandhi – Medical Student  
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Joyce Leifer, MD – Pediatric Hospital Medicine  
Abeer Azzuga, MD – Neonatology / Pediatrics  
Brandon Hage, MD – Pediatric Anesthesiology  
Mihaela Visoiu, MD – Pediatric Anesthesiology  
Darcy Moschenross, MD – Psychiatry  
Ida Brockman, MD – Psychiatry  
Shinny-Yi Chou – Psychiatry  
Jennifer Marin, MD – Emergency Medicine / Pediatrics  
Ag Nuwan Perera, MD – Emergency Medicine  
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Gillian Kruszka, MD – Family Medicine and Psychiatry Resident  
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Katheryn Schloss, MD – Pediatrics / Resident  
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Martha Stewart, MD – Pediatrics / Resident  
Lauren Kunkle, PA – Urogynecology  
Rohan Rao, MD – Pediatrics  
Sarah Bedoyan, MD – Pediatrics Resident  
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Heather Hohmann, MD – OB/GYN  
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Molly Mack, MD – Pediatrics Resident  
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Jignesh Unadkat, MD - Plastic Surgery  
Jonathan Yadlosky, MD - Family and Community Medicine  
Richard Hoffmaster, MD - Family Medicine, Geriatrics and Palliative Care  
David Wolfson, MD – Pediatrics

Yonairy Collado, MD – Pediatrics  
 Yael Schenker, MD - Professor of Medicine  
 Ashley Reasey, PA - Palliative and Supportive Care  
 Jane Soung, MD - Assistant Professor of Pediatrics  
 Allison Serra, MD, MPH - Assistant Professor OB/GYN  
 Sami Makaroun, MD - Maternal and Fetal Medicine  
 Sapna Parker, MD – Pediatrics  
 Anna Kim, MD – Pediatrics  
 Adam Simcox, NP - Palliative Care  
 Heather Mikes, DO – Palliative Care  
 Christi Lynn Kolarcik – Medical Student  
 Anna Binnstock, MD - Maternal Fetal Medicine  
 Tiffany Deihl, MD - OB/GYN  
 Samantha Opitz – Medical Student  
 Amar Bansal, MD – Assistant Professor of Medicine  
 Katrina Clacks, CRNP - Palliative Care  
 Colleen Hutzell, LMSW – Social Work  
 Michelle Watkinson, MD – Pediatrics / Resident  
 Angela Garcia, MD – Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation / Pediatrics  
 Shannon Joy, CRNP – Palliative Care Medicine  
 Emely Carmona – Medical Student  
 Karl B. Bezak, MD – Palliative Medicine  
 Silvia Arslanian, MD – Pediatric Endocrinology  
 Rosemary Froelich, MD – OB/GYN - Maternal Fetal Medicine  
 Cristin McDermott – Hospital Medicine / Pediatrics  
 Catherine Calkins, CRNP – Palliative Care  
 Laura Voigt, MD – Pediatrics  
 Richard Guido, MD – OB/GYN / Anisa Kanbour Chair of Gynecology  
 Judy C Chang, MD, MPH – OB/GYN, Reproductive Sciences and Internal Medicine, Assistant  
 Dean of Medical Student Research

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In 2016 Kaiser Permanente pledged to become carbon neutral. In 2020 they achieved carbon neutral status by installing solar arrays, purchasing renewable energy, increasing energy efficiency in their buildings and purchasing carbon offsets.

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