

SUBJECT: Climate Change White Paper
American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP)

SUBMITTED BY: ACOFP Board of Governors

REFERRED TO: 2022 American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP)
Congress of Delegates

RESOLUTION NO. 3

1 RESOLVED, that the Congress of Delegates 2021 resolution on Climate Change of the
2 American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP) be APPROVED as a
3 white paper submitted by the ACOFP Board of Governors.

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Climate Change White Paper

6 Climate change is defined as a range of global patterns including global warming, sea level
7 rise, ice mass loss, shifts in flower/plant blooming and extreme weather events.
8 International studies have identified several consequences of climate change including
9 heatwaves, storms, fires, droughts, floods, and agriculture loss resulting in health-related
10 consequences, such as an increase in undernutrition, cardiovascular disease, respiratory
11 disease, and vector borne disease. The World Health Organization 2014 assessment
12 estimates an additional 250,000 potential deaths annually between 2030 and 2050 due to
13 the impacts of climate change. Therefore, the American College of Osteopathic Family
14 Physicians (ACOFP) membership have called for action to reduce or reverse climate change
15 and address the negative health consequences that occur as a result of climate change.

16 The ACOFP recognizes that climate change poses a direct threat to public health. Climate
17 change seriously impacts all populations; however, it can disproportionately affect
18 vulnerable populations. In our commitment to protecting patients from the negative health
19 consequences of climate change we will endorse and promote local, state, and federal
20 initiatives that battle climate change. Further, as an organization we commit to addressing
21 climate change in the following ways:

22 1. Commitment to Sustainability Standards

- 23 a. ACOFP will strive to meet industry standards with use of sustainable products
24 when planning events.
- 25 b. ACOFP staff will address sustainability practices and take these into
26 consideration when choosing conference venues.

27 2. Providing Virtual Options for Continued Education

- 28 a. in 2020 the ACOFP had it's first virtual conference due to the COVID 19
29 pandemic. The ACOFP vows to continue to make a virtual option for continuing

30 medical education, which conserves gas emissions, helps reduce environmental
31 waste, etc. which contributes to a reduction in climate change.

32 3. Supporting Research

33 a. ACOFP will work with the liaison to the Osteopathic Family Physician Journal to
34 encourage research and publications regarding the health impacts of climate
35 change.

36 4. Developing Education

37 a. ACOFP shall offer education regarding the public health implications of climate
38 change. Education shall include relevant current events and at risk populations,
39 identification of health related complications and appropriate medical
40 interventions.

41 b. ACOFP will develop education that will enable members to educate patients,
42 their community, and lawmakers about the health consequences of climate
43 change.

44 5. Producing Resources

45 a. The ACOFP will prepare a list of resources on climate change and its health
46 impacts to be published on the ACOFP website to adequately educate physicians
47 and patients.

48 b. The ACOFP will support the development of education for patients and
49 physicians regarding the health impacts of climate change.

50 6. Engagement of Committees and Work Groups

51 a. As climate change is widespread and a large topic to tackle as an organization,
52 the ACOFP shall honor above commitments through the work of its various
53 committees and work groups as applicable.

54 b. Due to the disproportionate impact of climate change on specific groups
55 (women, children and minorities), appropriate committees and/or work groups
56 will be encouraged to address climate change within their own purview. This
57 may include developing educational programming, producing patient education,
58 hosting podcasts, or engaging in policy writing regarding the health impacts of
59 climate change. Below are some examples, but not requirements, of this white
60 paper.

61 i. Women's Leadership Committee could address the impact of climate
62 change on female health by providing resources to members or a
63 speaker on this topic.

64 ii. The DEI Advisory Group could host a podcast or speaking event at a
65 conference addressing the impact of climate change on minority
66 populations.

67 iii. Federal Legislation and Advocacy Committee to support policy that
68 limits the health effects of climate change on Americans.

69 7. Addressing Public Health through Legislation

- 70 a. The ACOFP Board of Governors will use this white paper to draft a letter
71 encouraging the US Surgeon General to publish education addressing the health-
72 related consequences of climate change following adoption of this white paper.
- 73 The ACOFP Board of Governors will monitor the impact of climate change on patients and
74 inpatient/outpatient practices of family physicians and continue to develop policy and
75 programming beyond that described in this white paper as necessary.

FINAL ACTION: APPROVED as of March 16, 2022

References:

- [Ebi KL, Hess JJ. Health risks due to climate change: Inequity in causes and consequences. Health Affairs 2020;39.](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Climate effects on health.](#)
- [World Health Organization. Climate change and health.](#)
- <https://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/default.htm>
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- <https://www.aafp.org/afp/2019/1115/p602.html>
- https://www.aafp.org/dam/AAFP/documents/patient_care/everyone_project/health-equity-toolkit/climate-change-module.pdf