

Health adaptation to climate change in NYC

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This internship with the **Natural Resource Defense Council** looked at the projected health impacts of climate change and identified ways to prepare for those threats.

Health adaptation best practices

- NRDC posed the question: to what extent are health concerns being addressed in climate change adaptation planning, especially to help the most vulnerable populations and neighborhood prepare?
- A review of existing state and local Climate Adaptation Plans revealed that health is not always a priority or even a focus
- Pulled out best practices from plans that do consider health, and can now press stakeholders to include these concerns in climate adaptation planning
- Looked at whether the specific health needs of vulnerable populations are being addressed and found that NYC environmental justice groups are starting to make sure these voices are heard

Waterborne illnesses

- NRDC produces a series of factsheets on the effects that climate change will have on various health hazards, and I am developing one on waterborne illnesses
- This project has been a synthesis of the increased knowledge about the environmental impacts of climate change this internship has provided and my ongoing public health training in the ecology and impacts of waterborne diseases

Emergency planning

- Emergency and natural disaster plans should be prepared not just for threats we face today, but for the contingencies of a changing climate
- However, there are few states that address the fact that emergency planning will look different in a world with higher sea levels, more intense weather events
- After researching federal and state emergency planning structures I proposed methods for federal leadership through FEMA emergency planning guidelines to account for future climate threats

State factsheets

- Compiled information on the projected health impacts of climate change in the tri-state area. For instance, NYC could see 4 times as many poor air quality days by the end of the century, exacerbating the risk of asthma attacks and other respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses
- Used this information in creating a factsheet to help NY, NJ and CT congress members understand the gravity of climate change and the need for adaptation action today

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