

#### 117TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION

# H. R. 3271

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop and implement a national strategic action plan and program to assist health professionals and systems in preparing for and responding to the public health effects of climate change, and for other purposes.

## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

May 17, 2021

Mr. Cartwright (for himself, Ms. Matsui, Mr. Carbajal, Mr. Schneider, Ms. Schakowsky, Mr. Blumenauer, Mr. Jones, Mr. Bowman, Ms. Norton, Ms. Pingree, Ms. Barragán, Mr. Espaillat, Mr. Khanna, Mr. Tonko, Mr. Grijalva, Ms. Meng, Mr. Casten, Ms. Jackson Lee, Mr. Huffman, Mr. Cohen, Ms. Strickland, and Ms. Moore of Wisconsin) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

# A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop and implement a national strategic action plan and program to assist health professionals and systems in preparing for and responding to the public health effects of climate change, and for other purposes.

- 1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
- 2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
- 3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
- 4 This Act may be cited as the "Climate Change Health
- 5 Protection and Promotion Act of 2021".

1	SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND CLI-
2	MATE CHANGE.
3	(a) FINDINGS.—The U.S. Global Change Research
4	Program Climate and Health Assessment states that—
5	(1) the impacts of human-induced climate
6	change are increasing nationwide;
7	(2) rising greenhouse gas concentrations result
8	in increases in temperature, changes in precipitation,
9	increases in the frequency and intensity of some ex-
10	treme weather events, and rising sea levels;
11	(3) these climate change impacts endanger our
12	health by affecting our food and water sources, the
13	air we breathe, the weather we experience, and our
14	interactions with the built and natural environments;
15	and
16	(4) as the climate continues to change, the risks
17	to human health continue to grow.
18	(b) Sense of Congress.—It is the sense of Con-
19	gress that—
20	(1) climate change poses threats to the United
21	States and globally through its impacts on society,
22	the economy, the physical environment, and national
23	security;
24	(2) climate change health threats are growing
25	in scale and severity.

- (3) climate change disproportionately affects people of the United States who are economically disadvantaged, belong to communities of color, or have other social and health vulnerabilities;
- (4) climate change impacts anywhere in the world can threaten the health of people of the United States through such pathways as infectious disease pandemics, climate-driven migration and displacement, and social, economic, and political disruption; and
- (5) the Federal Government, in cooperation with international, State, Tribal, and local governments, nongovernmental organizations, businesses, and individuals, should use all practicable means and measures—
  - (A) to assist the efforts of public health and health care professionals, first responders, health care systems, States, the District of Columbia, territories, municipalities, and Native American and local communities to incorporate measures to prepare public health and health care systems to respond to the impacts of climate change;
- 24 (B) to ensure—

1	(i) that the Nation's public health and
2	health care professionals have sufficient in-
3	formation to prepare for and respond to
4	the adverse health impacts of climate
5	change;
6	(ii) the application of scientific re-
7	search in advancing understanding of—
8	(I) the health impacts of climate
9	change; and
10	(II) strategies to prepare for and
11	respond to the health impacts of cli-
12	mate change;
13	(iii) the identification of communities
14	and populations vulnerable to the health
15	impacts of climate change, including in-
16	fants, children, pregnant women, the elder-
17	ly, individuals with disabilities or pre-exist-
18	ing illnesses, low-income populations, com-
19	munities of color, those who experience en-
20	vironmental injustices, and unhoused indi-
21	viduals;
22	(iv) the development of strategic re-
23	sponse plans to be carried out by public
24	health and health care professionals for the
25	communities described in clause (iii):

1	(v) the improvement of health status
2	and health equity through efforts to pre-
3	pare for and respond to climate change;
4	and
5	(vi) the inclusion of health impacts in
6	the development of climate change re-
7	sponses;
8	(C) to encourage further research, inter-
9	disciplinary partnership, and collaboration
10	among stakeholders in order to—
11	(i) understand and monitor the health
12	impacts of climate change, including men-
13	tal health impacts;
14	(ii) improve public health knowledge
15	and response strategies to climate change;
16	(iii) identify actions and policies that
17	are beneficial to health and that mitigate
18	climate health impacts; and
19	(iv) develop strategies to address
20	water-, food-, and vector-borne infectious
21	diseases and other public health emer-
22	gencies;
23	(D) to enhance preparedness activities, and
24	health care and public health infrastructure, re-
25	lating to climate change and health;

1 (E) to encourage each and every commu-2 nity to learn about the impacts of climate 3 change on health; and

(F) to assist the efforts of developing countries to incorporate measures to prepare public health and health care systems to respond to the impacts of climate change.

#### 8 SEC. 3. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS.

Nothing in this Act limits the authority provided to or responsibility conferred on any Federal department or agency by any provision of any law (including regulations) or authorizes any violation of any provision of any law (including regulations), including any health, energy, environmental, transportation, or any other law or regulation.

# 15 SEC. 4. NATIONAL STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN AND PRO-

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#### (a) Requirement.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (referred to in this Act as the "Secretary"), on the basis of the best available science, and in consultation pursuant to paragraph (2), shall publish a national strategic action plan and establish a climate and health program to ensure that public health and health care systems

- are prepared for and can respond to the impacts of climate change on health in the United States and other countries.
  - (2) Consultation.—In developing or making any revision to the national strategic action plan and program, the Secretary shall—
    - (A) consult with the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Director of the National Institutes of Health, the Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans & Atmosphere, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Director of the Indian Health Service, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, the heads of other appropriate Federal agencies, Tribal governments, and State and local government officials; and
    - (B) provide meaningful opportunity for engagement, comment, and consultation with relevant public stakeholders, particularly representatives of at-risk populations, environmental justice communities, Tribal communities,

nities, public health organizations, and scientists.

#### (b) ACTIVITIES.—

#### (1) NATIONAL STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN.—

- (A) In General.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary, acting through the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and in collaboration with other Federal agencies as appropriate, shall, on the basis of the best available science, and in consultation with the entities described in subsection (a)(2)(A), publish a national strategic action plan under subsection (a)(1) to guide the climate and health program and assist public health and health care professionals in preparing for and responding to the impacts of climate change on public health in the United States and other countries, particularly developing countries.
- (B) NATIONAL STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN COMPONENTS.—The national strategic plan under subsection (a)(1) shall include an assessment of the health system capacity of the United States to address climate change, including—

1	(i) identifying and prioritizing commu-
2	nities and populations vulnerable to the
3	health impacts of climate change;
4	(ii) identifying the link between envi-
5	ronmental injustice and vulnerability to the
6	impacts of climate change and prioritizing
7	those who have been harmed by environ-
8	mental and climate injustice;
9	(iii) providing outreach and commu-
10	nication aimed at public health and health
11	care professionals and the public to pro-
12	mote preparedness and response strategies;
13	(iv) providing for programs across
14	Federal agencies to advance research re-
15	lated to the impacts of climate change on
16	health;
17	(v) identifying and assessing existing
18	preparedness and response strategies for
19	the health impacts of climate change;
20	(vi) prioritizing critical public health
21	and health care infrastructure projects;
22	(vii) providing modeling and fore-
23	casting tools of climate change health im-
24	pacts, including local impacts, where fea-
25	sible;

1	(viii) establishing academic and re-
2	gional centers of excellence;
3	(ix) providing technical assistance and
4	support for preparedness and response
5	plans for the health threats of climate
6	change in States, municipalities, terri-
7	tories, Indian Tribes, and developing coun-
8	tries; and
9	(x) developing, improving, integrating,
10	and maintaining domestic and inter-
11	national disease surveillance systems and
12	monitoring capacity to respond to health-
13	related impacts of climate change, includ-
14	ing on topics addressing—
15	(I) water-, food-, and vector-
16	borne infectious diseases and climate
17	change;
18	(II) pulmonary effects, including
19	responses to aeroallergens and toxic
20	exposures;
21	(III) cardiovascular effects, in-
22	cluding impacts of temperature ex-
23	tremes;

1	(IV) air pollution health effects,
2	including heightened sensitivity to air
3	pollution;
4	(V) harmful algal blooms;
5	(VI) mental and behavioral
6	health impacts of climate change;
7	(VII) the health of migrants, ref-
8	ugees, displaced persons, and vulner-
9	able communities;
10	(VIII) the implications for com-
11	munities and populations vulnerable
12	to the health effects of climate
13	change, as well as strategies for re-
14	sponding to climate change within
15	such communities;
16	(IX) Tribal, local, and commu-
17	nity-based health interventions for cli-
18	mate-related health impacts;
19	(X) extreme heat and weather
20	events, including drought;
21	(XI) decreased nutritional value
22	of crops; and
23	(XII) disruptions in access to
24	routine and acute medical care.

- 1 (2) CLIMATE AND HEALTH PROGRAM.—The 2 Secretary, acting through the Director of the Cen-3 ters for Disease Control and Prevention, and in collaboration with other Federal agencies, as appro-5 priate, shall ensure that the climate and health pro-6 gram established under this section addresses pri-7 ority health actions, including by doing each of the 8 following: 9
  - (A) Serve as a credible source of information on the physical, mental, and behavioral health consequences of climate change for the United States population and globally.
  - (B) Track data on environmental conditions, disease risks, and disease occurrence related to climate change.
  - (C) Expand capacity for modeling and forecasting health effects that may be climate-related.
  - (D) Enhance the science base to better understand the relationship between climate change and health outcomes.
  - (E) Identify locations and population groups at greatest risk for specific health threats and effects, such as increased heat-related illnesses and injuries, degraded air and

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- water quality, food or water-related infections, vector-borne illnesses, pulmonary and cardiovascular effects, mental and behavioral health effects, and food, water, and nutrient insecurity.
  - (F) Communicate the health-related aspects of climate change, including risks and associated costs and ways to reduce them, to the public, decision-makers, public health professionals, and health care providers.
  - (G) Develop partnerships with other government agencies, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, universities, and international organizations to more effectively address domestic and global health aspects of climate change.
  - (H) Provide leadership to State and local governments, community leaders, health care professionals, nongovernmental organizations, environmental justice networks, faith-based communities, the private sector and the public, domestically and internationally, regarding health protection from climate change effects.
  - (I) Develop and implement preparedness and response plans for health threats, such as

- 1 heat waves, severe weather events, and infec-2 tious diseases.
  - (J) Provide technical advice and support to State and local health departments, the private sector, and others in developing and implementing national and global preparedness measures related to the health effects of climate change.
    - (K) Promote workforce development by helping to ensure the training of a new generation of competent, experienced public health and health care professionals to respond to the health threats posed by climate change.
- 14 (c) Periodic Assessment and Revision.—Not 15 later than 1 year after the date of first publication of the national strategic action plan under subsection (a)(1), and 16 annually thereafter, the Secretary shall periodically assess, 17 18 and revise as necessary, the national strategic action plan 19 under subsection (a)(1) and the climate and health pro-20 gram under subsection (a)(1), to reflect new information 21 collected pursuant to the implementation of the national 22 strategic action plan and program and otherwise, including information on—

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- 1 (1) the status of and trends in critical environ-2 mental health indicators and related human health 3 impacts;
  - (2) the trends in and impacts of climate change on public health;
  - (3) advances in the development of strategies for preparing for and responding to the impacts of climate change on public health; and
  - (4) the effectiveness of the implementation of the national strategic action plan in protecting against climate change health threats.

#### (d) Implementation.—

- (1) Implementation through this.—The Secretary shall exercise the Secretary's authority under this Act and other Federal statutes to achieve the goals and measures of the national strategic action plan and climate and health program.
- (2) OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES.—The Secretary and Federal officials of other relevant Federal agencies shall administer public health programs and initiatives authorized by laws other than this Act, subject to the requirements of such laws, in a manner designed to achieve the goals of the national strategic action plan and climate and health program.

1 (3) Health impact assessment.—The heads
2 of all Federal agencies shall, on a regular basis, as3 sess the impacts that proposed and current laws,
4 policies, and programs in their jurisdiction have or
5 may have on protection against climate change
6 health threats and shall assist State, Tribal, local,
7 and territorial governments to conduct such assess8 ments.

## 9 SEC. 5. ADVISORY BOARD.

- 10 (a) Establishment.—The Secretary shall, pursuant
- 11 to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.),
- 12 establish a permanent science advisory board to be com-
- 13 prised of not less than 10 and not more than 20 members.
- 14 (b) Appointment of Members.—The Secretary
- 15 shall appoint the members of the science advisory board
- 16 from among individuals who—
- 17 (1) are recommended by the President of the
- National Academy of Sciences and the President of
- 19 the National Academy of Medicine; and
- 20 (2) have expertise in essential public health and
- 21 health care services, including with respect to vulner-
- able populations, climate change, environmental and
- climate justice, and other relevant disciplines.

- 1 The Secretary shall ensure that the science advisory board
- 2 includes members with practical or lived experience with
- 3 relevant issues.
- 4 (c) Functions.—The science advisory board shall—
- 5 (1) provide scientific and technical advice and
- 6 recommendations to the Secretary on the domestic
- 7 and international impacts of climate change on pub-
- 8 lic health, populations, and regions particularly vul-
- 9 nerable to the effects of climate change, and strate-
- gies and mechanisms to prepare for and respond to
- the impacts of climate change on public health;
- 12 (2) advise the Secretary regarding the best
- science available for purposes of issuing the national
- strategic action plan and conducting the climate and
- health program; and
- 16 (3) submit a report to Congress on its activities
- and recommendations not later than 1 year after the
- date of enactment of this Act and not later than
- every year thereafter.
- 20 (d) Support.—The Secretary shall provide financial
- 21 and administrative support to the board.
- 22 SEC. 6. CLIMATE CHANGE HEALTH PROTECTION AND PRO-
- 23 MOTION REPORTS.
- 24 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall offer to enter
- 25 into an agreement, including the provision of such funding

- 1 as may be necessary, with the National Academies of
- 2 Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, under which such
- 3 National Academies will prepare periodic reports to aid
- 4 public health and health care professionals in preparing
- 5 for and responding to the adverse health effects of climate
- 6 change that—
- 7 (1) review scientific developments on health im-
- 8 pacts of climate change; and
- 9 (2) recommend changes to the national stra-
- tegic action plan and climate and health program.
- 11 (b) Submission.—The agreement under subsection
- 12 (a) shall require a report to be submitted to Congress and
- 13 the Secretary and made publicly available not later than
- 14 1 year after the first publication of the national strategic
- 15 action plan, and every 4 years thereafter.

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