

Interagency Collaboration: Multnomah County Health Department

Multnomah County Health Department (MCHD) in Oregon has a long-term focus on equity and a history of working with community-based organizations on place-based health initiatives, and with the regional land use and transportation planning organization and other agencies on climate adaptation. Many of MCHD's community partners work in environmental justice communities that are disproportionately vulnerable to climate health impacts.

In early 2016, MCHD built on an existing partnership with the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) to launch the Healthy Environments Data Indicator Project (HEDIP), in collaboration with Portland State University Planning Department. The project grew out of a request to improve community capacity to work with MCHD in designing health and environmental data collection, analysis, and tools of greater use to the community.

HEDIP created a climate and health tool that uses an interactive story board to display a series of brief narratives that accompany county maps of 20 indicators in four vulnerability domains: 1) demographics, 2) socioeconomic status, 3) existing health burden, and 4) air pollution from point sources. The indicators were also combined into a single score that was used to rank and map climate and health vulnerability for each of the 171 Multnomah County census tracts. CCC provided input into indicator selection and display. In a facilitated training with four CCC climate and environmental justice member organizations, MCHD reviewed the HEDIP findings and discussed the use of data to support policy and systems change.

Key Action Steps:



- Establish partnerships with local CBOs that represent communities that bear a disproportionate burden of climate and/or environmental impacts. (See [Section 7.2—Engagement](#))
- Seek input from community partners on indicators, and share data and information to build CBO capacity to understand and use data to engage in local planning and policy advocacy.
- Translate climate and health vulnerability assessments into accessible, understandable formats.
- Use data to inform local and state policymakers about health vulnerabilities relevant to policy.



CCC developed and piloted two community-led climate and health workshops that covered climate, health, and justice concepts, and used the HEDIP tool to educate policy makers about the importance of addressing the needs of disadvantaged communities in state climate policy. These conversations informed the discussion of a proposed “Healthy Climate Bill” (SB1574) that would create a carbon trading market linked with GHGE reduction goals, and direct a portion of carbon auction revenues to projects that benefit disadvantaged communities. HEDIP served to illustrate a potential mechanism to identify disadvantaged communities.

During this time, MCDH, CCC, and other stakeholders identified air pollution as a key priority. Further analysis by MCDH determined that transportation-related pollution and residential wood smoke burning contributed more pollution than point sources in Multnomah County. These analyses—with other HEDIP data—informed development of neighborhood climate and health profiles and policy briefs, and were used by MCDH to provide input into Multnomah County’s analyses of 30 state legislative bills.

Future Work and Lessons Learned

MCHD continues to translate data into action, using the Integrated Transport and Health Impact Modeling Tool (ITHIM) to inform the Regional Transportation Plan (See Section [7.1—Surveillance](#)). MCHD is now an active participant in an interdepartmental workgroup convened by the County Office of Sustainability to update and implement the county’s climate action plan, and is providing technical assistance on the use of HEDIP climate vulnerability maps. For example, Transportation and Emergency Management are using the maps to inform planning efforts.

Learn More

- [Multnomah County Climate Vulnerability Maps](#)

