

## 2016 PSR Maine Position Paper on Climate Change

*“The complexities of policies to mitigate human-induced climate change are clear. Meanwhile, additional resources and strategies will be needed to reduce the health risks related to global change that have already arisen or are now unavoidable. For populations to live sustainably and with good long-term health, the health sector must work with other sectors in reshaping how human societies plan, build, move, produce, consume, share, and generate energy.”<sup>1</sup>*

There is little doubt that the global climate is changing rapidly. While there may be some lingering uncertainty about the precise mechanisms driving these observed climate changes, there is broad consensus in the scientific community that the release of heat trapping gasses into the atmosphere primarily as a result of the combustion of fossil fuels is largely responsible.

Since the PSR Maine’s original Death by Degrees report published in 2000, there has been a wealth of accumulated data further confirming the impacts of climate change on human health as a result of rising temperatures, rising sea levels and extreme weather events as well as the particulate and volatile pollution from fossil fuel combustion.

We recognize that there are many ways to mitigate climate change including energy conservation and efficiency, switching to alternative and renewable energy sources, reforestation and economic and tax policies that incentivize these changes. The implications for environmental justice, environmental refugees, public health preparedness and response all add additional layers of complexity to this multi-dimensional problem.

PSR Maine is committed to actively increasing awareness about the effects of climate change on human health and advocating for strong public policy aimed at climate change mitigation and adaptation for the sake of to the health of Maine citizens. We strive to be the medical and public health voice regarding the health effects of climate change in Maine, and seek to work in partnership with other organizations when our medical expertise is needed and when new collaborations will enhance our work.

Our climate and health mission is focused on educating Maine medical and healthcare professionals and students, citizens, and policy makers. Our tools include our 2015 updated report *Death by Degrees: The health crisis of climate change in Maine* as well as public presentations, direct and grassroots advocacy.

Our work is informed by a number of scientific reports and organizations including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the National Climate Assessment, the Maine Center for Disease Control, and the Climate Change Institute at the University of Maine.

We are firmly committed to work toward preventing and responding to one of the greatest threats to human survival.

---

<sup>1</sup> Globalization, Climate Change, and Human Health, Anthony J. McMichael, M.B., B.S., Ph.D., N Engl J Med 2013; 368:1335-1343, April 4, 2013