

Maine Health Professionals for Climate Action Goal and Priority Activities

Primary Goal: To Eliminate Fossil Fuels

The primary long-term goal of Maine Health Professionals for Climate Action (MHPCA) is to eliminate the use of fossil fuels. While we recognize this is an ambitious goal, we firmly believe it is essential to achieve our vision of a healthier future for our patients, neighbors, and families. The continued use of fossil fuels significantly contributes to the current climate crisis, leading to severe health issues such as respiratory diseases, tick- and mosquito-borne diseases, cardiovascular problems, and heat-related illnesses, among others. Moreover, air pollution from the burning of fossil fuels exacerbates conditions like asthma and bronchitis, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations. By transitioning away from fossil fuels and toward the use of renewable sources of energy, we can improve air quality, reduce health disparities, and create a safer, healthier environment for everyone.

Priority Activities for 2024

Over the next several years, MHPCA will engage in bold actions to end the use of fossil fuels, such as urging the banning of fossil fuel advertising in Maine and advocating for “polluters pay” legislation requiring those in the fossil fuel industry to pay for the harms they cause. Additionally, in the coming year, MHPCA will participate in ongoing efforts to reduce fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions in Maine, including building electrification and contributing to the Maine Climate Action Plan.

Building Electrification – PSR Maine is collaborating with partners to advance building electrification (BE) in Maine and promote BE policy. Alongside PSR Maine, MHPCA will identify and work with Maine organizations representing marginalized communities to ensure equity in BE efforts. MHPCA will provide educational and training opportunities for health professionals on the meaning and benefits of building electrification for climate and health. Additionally, MHPCA will engage in efforts to educate policymakers and advocate for BE legislation and regulatory policy.

Maine Climate Action Plan – The Maine Climate Council is updating Maine’s Climate Action Plan originally published in 2020. A draft plan with strategies and recommendations for each workgroup, along with a survey for individual input, was released in mid-June (link above). MHPCA will encourage health professionals, particularly those from or serving underrepresented populations, to participate in the survey with a focus on health-relevant workgroups. In addition to the survey, public meetings about the climate plan will be held across the state in the coming months. MHPCA will share meeting dates and encourage member participation. Lastly, MHPCA will collaborate with partners to submit collective comments on the draft plan, emphasizing health and equity. Comments are due in the late fall.