Role of public health

Crook County Health Department (CCHD) is assessing key climate change risks, identifying populations most vulnerable to the related health impacts, and formulating possible adaptation strategies. The county is also working to build and engage interdisciplinary partnerships to further enhance public readiness to take action. The Crook County Health Department believes that if left unaddressed, climate change impacts will continue to affect not only our community health, but also the local economy, food production, and health care needs.

Statewide risks to human health

Injury/Morbidity/Mortality
- Extreme weather and storm events
- Rising temperatures

Water and Vector-borne Diseases
- Insect and pest outbreaks
- Higher precipitation levels and flood events
- Increased algal blooms due to warming waters
- Changes in habitat and species

Respiratory Diseases
- Degraded air quality
- Rising temperatures
- Increased pollen counts
- Increased mold exposure
- Increases in wildfires

Malnutrition and Food Security
- Rising sea levels
- Rising temperatures and drought events
- Threatened food supplies

Mental Health
- Extreme weather threats and displacement
- Economic stress
- Environmental degradation
Key local climate variables and adaptation strategies

For more information and/or the full report, contact Crook County Health Department at 541-447-5165.

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) is one of nine agencies across the country that received a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Environmental Health (CDC-NCEH) as part of the Climate-Ready States and Cities Initiative. This program is intended to help agencies address the public health effects of climate change related events. The Climate and Public Health Program is part of the Public Health Division of the Oregon Health Authority.

Air quality
1. Monitor Crook County’s air quality results; compare them to past results in order to monitor trends.
2. Strengthen partnerships with the area DEQ to provide information to and protect the public during acute smoke events using the DEQ visibility scale, air quality index monitoring, and protocol.
3. Monitor asthma trends related to smoke events through the Coordinated Care Organization claims system.
4. Implement a Healthy Homes Initiative to assist in the education of families in Crook County.

Drought
1. Develop strategies to recognize health effects of drought on the population of Crook County. Continue to build relationships with regional partners.
2. Ensure information targeting at-risk populations for identified health effects related to drought are culturally appropriate and accessible.
3. Continue to gather local information through community assessment and incorporate into the regional health improvement plan.
4. Coordinate efforts through the Emergency Management work group.

Vector-borne and communicable disease
1. Monitor health trends in Crook County in regard to diseases that are vector-borne.
2. Receive reports and investigate reports of disease cases or clusters per communicable disease protocols, with local climate change risks incorporated into the assessment of contributing factors.
3. Foster and maintain lines of communication with local laboratories, hospitals, medical clinics, and schools in regard to notifying CCHD about unusual disease and/or trends, in addition to reportable diseases.

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