

37th National Black Nurses Day on Capitol Hill
Reimagining Health Equity: Addressing Ongoing Threats to America's Well-being

Saving Our Planet: Human Activities a Driver of Climate Change

The National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) serves as a national nursing body to influence legislation and policies that support comprehensive efforts to mitigate the effects of health inequities for all Americans. Studies indicate that we live in a climate crisis era that requires the integration of evidence-based science and health advocacy to influence legislation that will protect the public's health.^{5, 10} The impacts of climate change on human health have been well-documented over the past two decades and are projected to increase drastically if mitigation responses remain inadequate. To improve health equity, the **NBNA calls on the 119th Congress to support** legislation for alleviating the destabilization of societies caused by the impacts of climate change.

Background

- In the U.S., **38%** of socio-economically disadvantaged populations are at higher risk of residential outdoor nitrogen dioxide concentrations from cars, trucks, buses, power plants, and off-road equipment emissions.^{1,6,11}
- Air pollution is attributable to 31% of cardiovascular disease, costing about **\$252 billion** from 2019 to 2020.^{2,3,4}
- U.S. flood losses currently average **\$32 billion** and are projected to increase by **50%** by 2050, significantly reducing healthcare systems' ability to respond to climate crises and affecting the quality of healthcare provisions.⁸
- The costs of climate change's direct damage to health (excluding costs of damage mediated by effects on agriculture, water, and sanitation) will reach **\$2 to \$4 billion** annually by 2030.⁷
- Black Americans are **10-20% more likely**, and Hispanic/Latino/a people are **16-21% more likely to** live in census tracts with nearly **12 million pounds** of carcinogenic air releases, as well as those with less than high school education, irrespective of race and ethnicity.^{6,9}

Recommendations to Legislators

NBNA calls upon the 119th Congress to support legislation such as:

- **S. 1229: Green New Deal for Health Act**—This bill aims to prepare and empower the healthcare sector to protect the health and well-being of our workers, communities, and planet in the face of climate crises and other issues.
- **S. 5054: Polluters Pay Climate Fund Act of 2024**— To establish a fund that holds significant greenhouse gas emitters financially responsible for the climate damage caused by their pollution and to help communities impacted by climate change.
- **H.R. 598: Earth Act to Stop Climate Pollution by 2030**—This bill proposes a transition to 100% renewable electricity, zero-emission vehicles, and sustainable agricultural practices by 2030. It aims to combat climate change through extensive reforms in the energy and agriculture sectors.

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