

An aerial photograph of a coastline. The top half of the image shows deep blue ocean water with some white-capped waves. The bottom half shows a wide, light-colored sandy beach. The text is overlaid on the image.

Health Impacts of Climate Change: South Carolina

Presentation for the Southeast National Climate Assessment Health Sector Meeting, February 13, 2012

Max Learner, Ph.D.

Office of Public Health Preparedness

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

Public Health Issues

- Current and potential health impacts and concerns in South Carolina
- Surveillance and assessment
- Emergency management
- Planning and public policy for adaptation and mitigation

Current and potential health impacts

- Frequency, type, severity and duration of extreme weather events
 - And subtle impacts of climate change
- Vulnerable populations
 - Intersection of chronic illness and climate change
 - Food security
- Change in type and distribution of vector-borne, food-borne and water-borne diseases
- Impacts of sea level rise
- Economics: The Dismal Science

Surveillance and assessment

- DHEC Environmental Public Health Tracking System
 - Surveillance of key indicators
 - Communication of information to the public
 - <http://www.scdhec.gov/administration/epht/>

EPHT Home

[About EPHT](#)

[News & Resources](#)

[Public Health Actions](#)

[Dataset Details](#)

[Definitions](#)

[FAQs](#)

Content Areas

[Air Quality](#)

[Birth Defects](#)

[Cancer](#)

[Carbon Monoxide \(CO\)](#)

[Childhood Lead](#)

[Coastal Environment](#)

[Drinking Water Quality](#)

[Hospitalization](#)

[Mothers & Babies](#)

Please take
our short
survey.



TRACK IT.
MAP IT.
USE IT.

My Health & Environment - Environmental Public Health Tracking



Your resource for information about the health of South Carolina citizens and their environment.

View definitions, explanations and facts about each Content Area.

Air Quality

ABOUT

Create and Explore health and environmental maps, charts, trendlines, and data tables.

CREATE IT.

TRACK IT.

View tables of environmental and health data where you live, work and play.

Air Quality

GO

MAP IT.

View maps and charts of environmental and health data by county in SC.

Air Quality

GO

USE IT.

View suggestions to help make better choices for your health and the environment.

Air Quality

GO

"If you want to learn about the health of a population, look at the air they breathe, the water they drink, and the places where they live."

- Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, in the Fifth Century BC

Tell us how you have taken action to improve your health or the environment around you.



Definitions

FAQs

Content Areas

Air Quality

Birth Defects

Cancer

Carbon Monoxide (CO)

Childhood Lead

Coastal Environment

Drinking Water Quality

Hospitalizations

Mothers & Babies



Daily allergy forecast



National EPHT Portal



Click on the topic below or on the numbers in the image for more info.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1 Advisories
Swimming, Rip Tide, Shellfish,
Weather, Fish... | 2 Water Quality
Swimming Advisories, Run-off,
Real-time and Historical Data... | 3 Weather
Real-time Weather, Storm
Information and Activities... |
| 4 Air Quality
Pollen Count Index, Ozone
Index, Emissions... | 5 Fishing/Shellfish
Fish Advisories, Fish Watch,
Tidal Creeks... | 6 Seafood
Advantages of Eating Seafood,
Safe Handling of Seafood... |
| 7 Tidal Creeks
Tidal Creek, SC Estuarine and
Coastal Assessment Program... | 8 Life on the Coast
Advisories, SC Data, Tide
Tables... | 9 Marine Life Health
Dolphins, Mussel Watch,
Sentinel Species Research... |
| 10 Litter Prevention
Pet Waste, Garbage, Adopt-a-
Beach, Clean Marina... | 11 Beach Preservation
Protection, Erosion and Re-
Nourishment... | 12 Wildlife Conservation
Sea Turtles, Birds, Mammals,
Jellyfish... |

Emergency management

- Emergency plans for the full range of extreme weather events
- Responding to health and medical needs during and after events
- Important links with the Health Services Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology, the Environmental Division of Waste Management & Emergency Response and the Division of Emergency Medical Services

Planning and public policy

- Little public health attention is directed toward awareness of climate change issues, let alone adaptation and mitigation
- Public health and emergency management capabilities are greatly diminished due to state and federal funding cuts
- In SC, DHEC workforce has declined from 5,265 filled FTEs in 2000 to less than 3,400 filled FTEs in 2011
- Increased environmental pressures, demands for services and staff shortages for emergency response challenge the state's ability to promote and protect the health of the public and the environment
- Political and economic climates are not conducive to effective planning and action for adapting to or mitigating climate change

What public health can do

- Raise Awareness:
 - Offer opportunities for public health and environmental staff to learn about climate change impacts on health and environment
 - Incorporate adaptation and mitigation messages into public information and programs
- Focus on the here and now:
 - Extreme weather events are teachable moments

What public health can do

- Surveillance and Assessment:
 - Daily monitoring and response to disease outbreaks, hazardous material releases, climate-related illness
 - Sustaining surveillance, epidemiology and laboratory capabilities
 - Analyzing data and identifying trends and relationships between climate, environment and health