The Na onal Environmental Health Associa on (NEHA) aims to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change. These changes, including the e ects of extreme weather events on infrastructure and human health, have increased the need for preparedness and response across every sector of public health, especially environmental health (EH). EH professionals play an integral role in mi ga on, preparedness, response, and recovery. Clearly, NEHA's mission, to advance the environmental health professional for the purpose of providing a healthful environment for all.

Climate change is the greatest threat to global health. It a ects human health through air quality, extreme heat, drought, wildfires, extreme storms, floods, vector borne illnesses, and changing local weather pa erns.

Though global, the e ects of climate change are inherently local. All people are suscep ble to physical and mental health impacts; however, certain groups carry a heavier burden. These popula ons include children, people of color, older adults, people with disabili es, and people in impoverished communi es.

*Na t onal Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra t on

CLIMATE CHANGE AND FLOODING

Climate change is modifying precipita on pa erns and intensity of rainfall throughout the U.S. Flash flooding can occur when rivers experience a quick increase in precipita on during a short period of me. Frequent intense storms quickly saturate the soil, and in those urban areas with dense infrastructure and li le open soil, these storms overwhelm storm sewer systems, causing even more severe flooding. Periods of drought can also exacerbate this problem as the sudden and intense downpours cannot be absorbed quickly. Flooding can a ect many aspects of human health. For example:

- Sea level rise contributes to higher water levels, strong currents, and floa ng debris during flooding events. The increase in flooding puts people at risk of injuries, drowning, or death
- Warmer surface temperatures create a habitat that generates extreme storms. These characteris cs increase the exposure to vector-borne diseases and the poten al for dangerous extreme weather events
- During a flood, water can be contaminated through waterborne pathogens, chemicals from industrial areas and agriculture runo , stormwater overflow, or human and livestock waste. Exposure to these contaminants can pose serious health threats
- Community destruc on from flooding increases mental health e ects from trauma and property loss, destroy roads, and limit access to suppor ng health services
- Flooding can also cause food supply destruc on

Health e ects related to floods can contribute to school and work absences as well as decreased workplace produc vity.

POPULATIONS VULNERABLE FLOODING

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE ROLE

ASSESSMENT

EH professionals iden fy, assess, and help recommend solu ons for flood vulnerabili es.

- Assess local weather and precipit eas rtanÔ å exampls, - سبر odinƏ bi ۷ p ´ ecipit eas ş

RECOMMENDATIONS

- EH professionals should undergo the Environmental Health Training in Emergency Response (EHTER) training. The Awareness Level training focuses on EH responders' role to prepare for, respond to, and recover from air pollu on emergencies, and the Opera ons Level involves hands-on opera on prac ce and response to simulated events.
- NEHA recommends that communi es u lize a systema c approach to flood preparedness such as CDC's Building Resilience Against Climate E ects (BRACE) Framework.
- NEHA supports the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Reauthoriza on Act (PAHPRA) and calls on its members to examine their roles in the implementa on of this important bill.