Reflecting on 2023

In December, our team returned from the annual UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) held in Dubai, and the state of the world has been on our mind ever since. We are currently not on track to limit global warming to 1.5˚C, a goal set by 195 governments through the Paris Agreement. The World Meteorological Association revealed that we are likely to breach that threshold within the next five years, and, in the meantime, 2023 was the hottest year on record. According to the 2023 Report of Lancet Countdown, the health of humanity is at grave risk.

But there is still hope. At COP28, we saw a groundswell of commitment to climate and health from health professionals, hospitals, academic centers, cities, local governments, NGOs, activists, and advocates. For the first time in almost 30 years of negotiations, health was a central topic, and governments recognized that the end of the fossil fuel era is necessary and inevitable. You can read more about our perspectives on COP28, including on the new focus on health, key outcomes from the international negotiations, and the challenges and opportunities ahead for global climate action.

The door is open, but it won’t remain so forever – the health sector must accelerate its efforts to advance ambitious climate action to secure a healthy future for all communities. In this critical time, we are proud of how our Center grew in 2023, and we look forward to uplifting and generating solutions-oriented research, education, and policy in 2024.

Happy new year.

Arianne Teherani, Founding Co-Director

Sheri Weiser, Founding Co-Director

2023 Fourth Quarter Review

The UC Center for Climate, Health and Equity (CCHE) is now a Strategic Partner to the National Academy of Medicine’s (NAM) Climate Communities Network, and a Network Organization in NAM’s Action Collaborative on Decarbonizing the...
CCHE’s Founding Co-Director Sheri Weiser and Managing Director Sapna Thottathil represented UC Health at a Health Care Without Harm meeting in Washington D.C., where they spoke with policymakers about the University of California’s leadership on decarbonization and the benefits of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

Dr. Weiser also provided climate-health guidance to Global Nurses United, the largest federation of international nurses unions from 35 countries, as well as to the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions. These talks informed the U.S. National Nurses United’s recent statement urging governments to take action against the health impacts of climate change. Dr. Weiser continued to provide climate-health perspectives as a member of the National Academies Climate Security Roundtable, including on data gaps in climate change and infectious diseases.

Associate Director for Strategy and Communications Jennifer Monroe Zakaras represented CCHE on the working group for the 2023 Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change Policy Brief for the United States, which officially launched in November.

CCHE co-hosted the 4th Annual NorCal Symposium on Climate Change and Health, which focused on how climate change is shaping health and medical education.

CCHE also held a fall webinar series on the public health response to climate change and decarbonization in health care.

Finally, CCHE co-hosted a book launch for Susan Bauer-Wu’s new book A Future We Can Love: How We Can Reverse the Climate Crisis with the Power of our Hearts & Minds. You can view our past events online on our website.

In the News

Arianne Teherani was interviewed by UC News about her participation in COP28.

Jyoti Mishra spoke about her studies on climate trauma from the Camp Fire in a Washington Post article about “fire brain” in survivors of the Maui wildfires. Her research into the mental health impacts of wildfires was also covered by UC San Diego News.

Neeta Thakur and Sheri Weiser were guests on KALW Public Radio’s “Your Call” to speak about the long-term health impacts of wildfire smoke.

Meghana Gadgil spoke about climate change, threats to human health, and health system resilience at the third session of NASEM’s New Voices’ One Health Webinar Series and in a Forbes article about One Health in the context of climate change.

Gina Solomon’s FRESSCA project was showcased in a Valley Public Radio piece as a potential solution to harmful wildfire air pollution experienced by rural residents in the Central Valley.
Seema Gandhi’s efforts to eliminate harmful anesthetic gas emissions from UCSF operating rooms was showcased in an interview on CBS KPIX.

Arianne Teherani spoke about the importance of integrating climate change topics into medical education for a Healio news piece.

Tarik Benmarhnia and Jyoti Mishra participated in a UC San Diego Scripps Institution of Oceanography roundtable on how to fight and prevent wildfires and deal with their adverse effects, which was picked up by the Del Mar Times.

Tarik Benmarhnia’s study revealing higher infant mortality in Bangladesh’s flood zones was also covered in Mirage News.

Sheri Weiser and Arianne Teherani spoke to UCSF News about the adverse health effects of extreme heat.

Hilary Ong shared her perspective as a climate-informed physician for an Erie News Now article on training a new generation of climate doctors.

Chris Funk’s recent paper describing his work predicting climate disasters in East Africa was reviewed in UC Santa Barbara’s Daily Nexus.

Dr. Mishra is Co-Director of CCHE’s Climate Change and Mental Health Council. Drs. Thakur, Solomon, and Ong are CCHE-affiliated faculty. Dr. Ong also co-leads the UCSF Climate Hub. Dr. Gandhi is co-chair of CCHE’s health systems pillar. Dr. Benmarhnia is co-chair of CCHE’s Research Pillar and lead for the UC San Diego campus. Dr. Gadgil is a co-lead for the UC Berkeley campus. Dr. Funk is the lead for the UC Santa Barbara campus. Drs. Teherani and Weiser are CCHE’s Founding Co-Directors.

New Research

NIH awards over $3.7 million for climate change and HIV research: CCHE’s Founding Co-Director Sheri Weiser is a multiple principal investigator of a multidisciplinary team of researchers from UCSF, UCSB, the CUNY Institute for Implementation Science in Population Health, and the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai who are launching an innovative research study to advance our understanding of how climate change and extreme weather influence HIV-related health outcomes around the world.


“Am I going to have to run to get out of this place?” A qualitative study exploring HIV clinical and service provider experiences from California regions heavily impacted by climate disaster. Lissa Moran, Shannon M. Fuller, Shivalli Joshi, Simon Outram, Kimberly A. Koester, Wayne T. Steward, Emily A. Arnold. PLOS Climate, 2, 10 (2023): e0000269.

Do social vulnerability indices correlate with extreme heat health outcomes? Sahar Derakhshan, David P. Eisenman, Rupa Basu, Travis Longcore. The Journal of Climate


