

ACP says policies needed to improve environmental health

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Environmental pollutants can seriously harm human health, says the American College of Physicians (ACP) in a new position paper published today in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, titled "Environmental Health: A Position Paper From the American College of Physicians." The paper details policy actions that are needed to address the climate crisis and reduce exposure to hazardous substances and air and water

pollution. ACP affirms the need to achieve environmental justice so that everyone can live, work, learn, and play in a safe, healthy environment.

The paper reflects many of the concerns previously outlined in ACP's 2016 paper, [Climate and Health](#), but broadens recommended policy actions to include a wider array of environmental exposures that impact [human health](#). In order to improve [environmental health](#) for all:

- ACP recognizes that human and planetary health are interconnected, and that climate change is a global human and environmental health crisis. ACP calls for immediate action to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels.
- ACP calls for comprehensive action to achieve [environmental justice](#).
- ACP supports efforts to reduce indoor and outdoor air pollution and affirms support for the Clean Air Act. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should set robust air quality standards to protect public health and welfare.
- ACP supports improvements to the Safe Drinking Water Act, Clean Water Act, Lead and Copper Rule, and other laws and regulations dedicated to ensuring access to clean, potable, safe water.
- ACP supports action to protect the public from harmful exposures to toxic substances, including new and existing chemicals, with particular attention to children, pregnant people, and other susceptible populations.

- ACP recommends sustainable and sufficient funding for federal agencies with an environmental health mission

An accompanying editorial by authors from Icahn School of Medicine and Harvard Medical School call on ACP's policy recommendations to be implemented immediately to both save lives and relieve stressed healthcare delivery systems already struggling from increased demand. The authors also call on ACP to translate their policy recommendations into actionable plans to ensure that health care systems can act on recommendations. They also advocate for policies link greenhouse gas reductions to Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services participation and payment models, rather than health care systems only making pledges to implement policies.

More information: Environmental Health: A Position Paper From the American College of Physicians, *Annals of Internal Medicine* (2022). DOI: [10.7326/M22-1864](https://doi.org/10.7326/M22-1864). www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M22-1864

Environmental Health: Translating Policy Into Action, *Annals of Internal Medicine* (2022). DOI: [10.7326/M22-2808](https://doi.org/10.7326/M22-2808). www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M22-2808

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