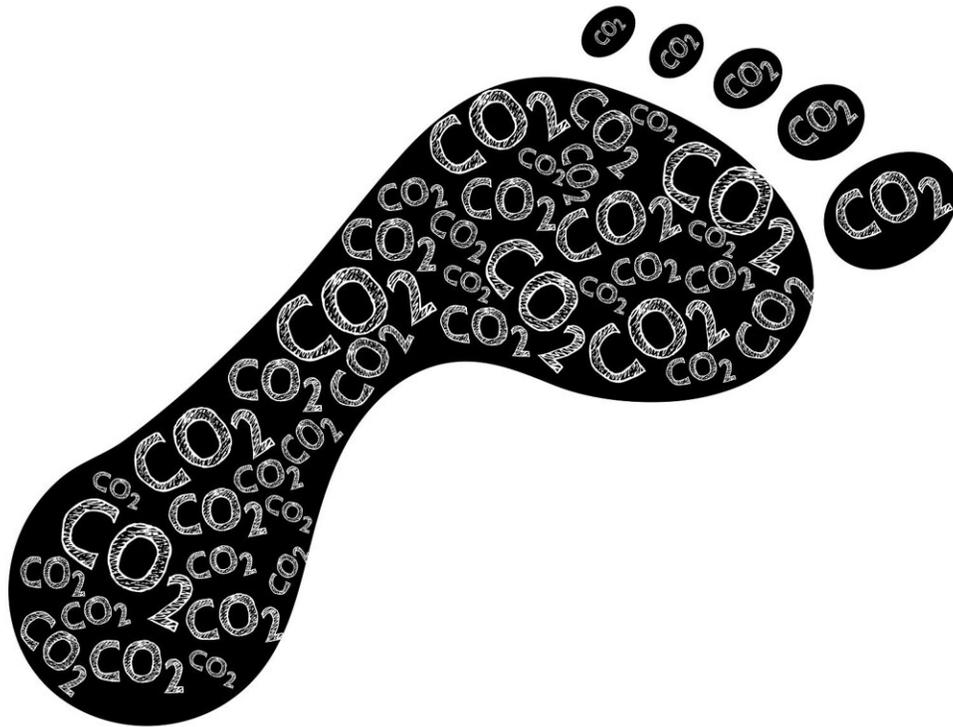


Physicians call on health care organizations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

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In a new commentary published in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, authors from Lahey Hospital and Medical Center, Beth Israel Lahey Health, Tufts University of School of Medicine and Case Western Reserve

Universities offer strategies for healthcare organizations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and outline potential strategy tradeoffs to consider toward this goal. They say health care has a moral imperative to reduce its emissions and environmental footprint and force transformation across all other sectors it touches.

The [health care industry](#) is both directly impacted by and a contributor to climate change. Extreme temperatures, forest fires, and natural calamities, and the expansion of the range of infectious diseases all have health impacts on persons worldwide. The global health care industry also leaves a significant environmental footprint, with healthcare accounting for the fifth-largest source of all greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Currently, there is no mandate to force these organizations to prioritize the reduction of GHG emissions.

In their call to action, the authors outline three broad scopes to understand the sources and magnitude of GHG emissions in the health care industry: direct emissions from healthcare organizations; indirect emissions by energy and utility suppliers; and supply chain and other emissions. The authors then argue that the short-term investments in more expensive but sustainable health care infrastructure are often both reasonable and profitable in the long term. They also call on health care stakeholders, policymakers, and clinicians to implement high-level changes to make healthcare more sustainable.

They advise that providing [health care](#) for all will not succeed without addressing the twin risk for environmental pollution and ecological catastrophes secondary to climate change.

More information: Sarju Ganatra et al, Health Care and Climate Change: Challenges and Pathways to Sustainable Health Care, *Annals of Internal Medicine* (2022). [DOI: 10.7326/M22-1241](https://doi.org/10.7326/M22-1241)

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