Communicating Climate Change As a Public Health Issue

CDPH

Ctr for Chronic Disease Prevention & Health Promotion

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Global Warming's Six Americas – Climate Change in the American Mind

- National sample (1010 interviews in English)
- Repeated in 2008, 2010 (two surveys), latest survey April-May, 2011
- Conducted by Yale University and George Mason University

The Six Americas Continuum, May 2011*

Alarmed 12%	Concerned 27%	Cautious 25%	Disengaged 10%	Doubtful 15%	Dismissive 10%

* Sample size not large enough to break out California respondents to see if they differ from national sample

Impact of using a health frame on climate change

- Interviews presenting climate change through different frames
- Health frame evokes stronger response, especially with the cautious, disengaged and doubtful of the Six Americas groupings

Conveying the Human Implications of Climate Change -- Key Points

- Climate Change is a serious threat to the public's health and wellbeing world wide
- The health of Americans is already being harmed by climate change, and it's likely to get worse in the not too distant future
- Many public health officials are aware of the risks but the but the public is not
- PH professionals must prevent climate change from harming human health, to extent possible
- This requires effectively informing the public and other decision makers about the risks

Four Main Messages

- Climate change is real and human-caused
- Climate change is bad for us and our communities in a number of ways
- We need to start taking action now to protect the health of our communities' most vulnerable populations
- Taking action creates a *win-win* situation as many actions we can take to address climate change can also benefit our health

CDPH Efforts on Climate Change Communications

- Workshops with Dr. Maibach and Cater Communications (LA and Oakland, Nov, 2010)
- Statewide call with Local Health Dept PIOs
- Statewide webinar (April, 2011)
- Message Brainstorming session (July, 2011)
- Develop initial digital messages to pilot with local health departments and other partners (Fall, 2011)

Opportunities

- Develop climate change and health messages
- Link climate change messages with ongoing community health efforts
  - Stress Co-benefits (or *win-wins*) in short and long term

- Use health "spokespeople" to deliver messages
  - AMA and APHA joint statement and national press briefing supporting EPA's regulation of CO_2
  - JAMA editorial on climate change and health

Discussion

- How can we expand health messaging on climate change?