

Child Health and State EPA Clean Power Plan Implementation

OVERVIEW

Outdoor air pollution is linked to respiratory problems in children, including decreased lung function, coughing, wheezing, more frequent respiratory illness, and asthma exacerbation. In 1970, Congress passed the federal Clean Air Act to address these and other concerns about America's worsening air quality.

The Clean Air Act is now being extended to reduce carbon emissions from power plants, with final rulemaking underway. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean Power Plan seeks to allow states to meet carbon reduction targets via 1 or more state-determined compliance strategies.

These actions are essential to limit immediate impacts on child respiratory health and in curtailing global climate change.

While Clean Power Plan implementation activities by EPA have been delayed by a US Supreme Court Ruling, states can continue to plan for implementation and work with regulators and power producers to limit carbon emissions.

AAP POSITION

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is dedicated to ensuring that children have an optimal environment in which to live, learn, and play.
- The AAP strongly supports the EPA's work to reduce carbon pollution and urges states to set a path to reduce carbon emissions via the EPA Clean Power Plan.
- State legislatures and regulatory agencies have a critical role in implementing the plan and meeting state and regional carbon emission reduction targets.
- Building political will for implementation of the EPA Clean Power Plan is an important child advocacy objective.
- Pediatricians should understand the threat of global climate change, anticipate their effects on children's health, and participate as children's advocates for strong mitigation and adaptation strategies now.
- AAP chapters are uniquely positioned to educate legislators and regulators about the unique environmental health needs of children and the importance of reducing power plant carbon emissions. By limiting carbon emissions, the air children breathe today will be cleaner, and will help to forestall global climate change in the future.
- AAP chapter advocates can also work with local and state health departments to strengthen public health infrastructure, disease surveillance and reporting, and disaster preparedness.

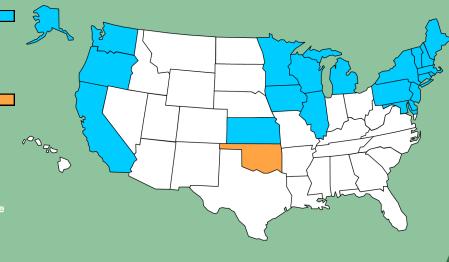
FACTS

- By 1990, the Clean Air Act prevented 205,000 premature deaths, 18 million childhood respiratory illnesses, and the loss of 10.4 million IQ points for children from lead exposure. After the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, emissions of 6 common pollutants dropped 41% through 2008.
- Over 80% of the current health burden from the changing climate is on children younger than 5
 years. These burdens include injury and death from natural disasters, increases in climatesensitive infectious diseases, increases in air-pollution related illness, and other heat-related
 illness.
- If fully implemented by 2030, the proposed EPA rule for existing power plants will result in 6,600 fewer premature deaths, 150,000 fewer child asthma attacks, and 180,000 fewer missed school days.

PROGRESS

- 21 states –
 state/regional carbon
 emission reduction plan
 established
- 1 state –
 executive order
 prohibits development
 of Clean Power Plan

For information on current law or pending legislation in your state, please contact the AAP Division of State Government Affairs at stgov@aap.org.



MORE

- AAP Policy-Global Climate Change and Children's Health http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/136/5/992
- AAP Policy-Ambient Air Pollution: Health Hazards to Children
 http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/114/6/1699
- AAP Council on Environmental Health www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/Committees-Councils-Sections/Council-on-Environmental-Health/Pages/default.aspx
- <u>Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units</u>-www.pehsu.net
- EPA Clean Power Plan Toolbox for States www2.epa.gov/cleanpowerplantoolbox