



Health at the COP21 - a report from Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA)

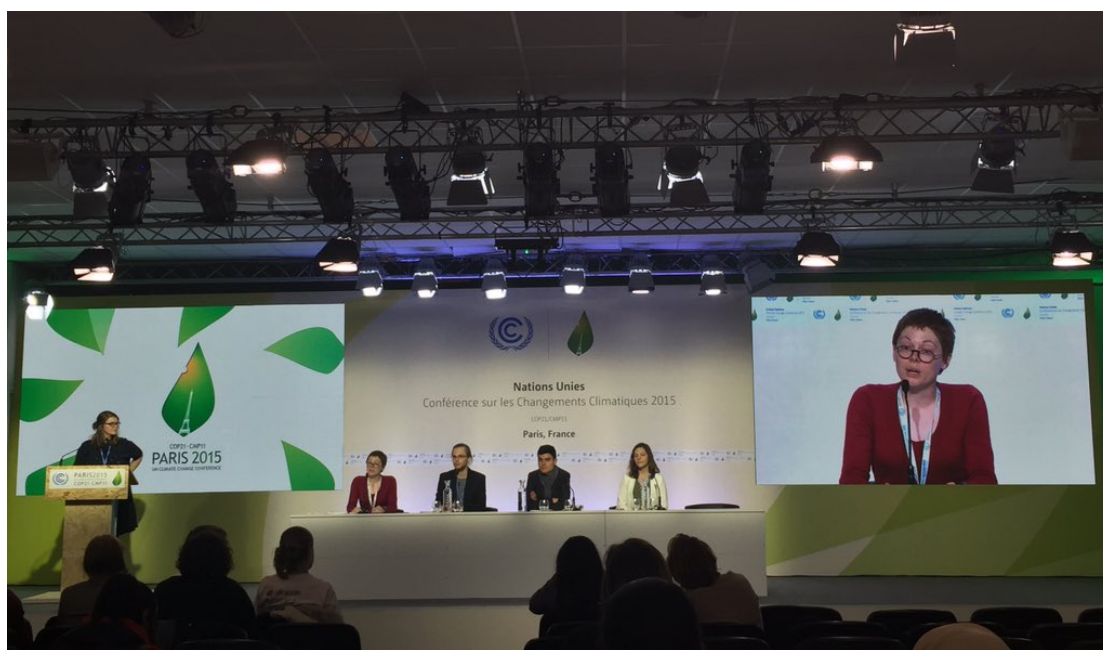


Health professionals and groups from around the world gathered in Paris to attend COP21, the global climate talks, as well as to attend concurrent meetings and conferences, and to use the opportunity to meet with negotiators and strategize together about how to keep the pressure up for people's health and wellbeing to be acknowledged as a key driver for, and an outcome of, ambitious global and national climate policy.

Climate and Health Alliance Executive Director Fiona Armstrong, Vice-President Peter Sainsbury, and CAHA Director/Australian Medical Students Association delegate Alice McGushin were in Paris for the COP, and the report below captures some of the efforts of climate and health advocates to ensure health was recognised in the text of the Paris Agreement, as well as report on some of the events they were involved in.

Health in the context of the negotiations to reach the Paris Agreement

Alice McGushin attended the COP as a delegate of the International Federation of Medical Students Associations. Along with other IFMSA and World Medical Association (WMA) delegates, Alice met with dozens of parties (delegates of countries who are party to the UNFCCC Convention) to encourage them to include health in the preamble and in Article Two (the purpose) of the Agreement. Alice spoke at a side event as part a youth non-governmental organizations (YOUNGO) day (*see image below*).



You can read a blog from Alice after week one here:

<https://www.amsa.org.au/uncategorized/20151211-coping-with-21-hours-of-sleep-for-two-weeks/> and watch Alice's COP21 debrief YouTube video here: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=pXmCNAHK8g0>

Fiona Armstrong attended the COP as a delegate of Climate Action Network Australia (CANA), working with CANA delegates in the lead-up to the COP to develop a series of key messages for climate action advocates.

During the COP both Alice and Fiona worked to raise the topic of health with the Australian negotiating team, seeking to reinforce calls for health to be included in the preamble as well as in Article Two, and in sections on mitigation and adaptation, as well as mentioning health specifically within the section on each country's national climate change plans – known as intended nationally intended commitments (INDCs).

The Paris Agreement does include health in the preamble, as seen in this extract below:

*“Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, **the right to health**, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the*

right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity,”

Although health is not specifically referenced in the purpose of the Paris Agreement, the Agreement's purpose does reference Article 1 of the 1992 Convention itself, which does refer to health (i.e. it refers to one of the risks of climate change as “significant deleterious effects.... on human health and welfare”).

The purpose of the Paris Agreement is essentially as follows:

- (a) Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C, recognizing that this would significantly reduce risks and impacts of climate change;*
- (b) Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production;*
- (c) Making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards such low greenhouse gas emissions and climate- resilient development.*

In Section IV of the agreement, 'Enhanced Action Prior to 2020', the co-benefits of climate mitigation for health is also mentioned, and states:

[The Conference of the Parties....

*“Recognizes the social, economic and environmental value of voluntary mitigation actions and their **co-benefits** for adaptation, **health** and sustainable development”*

The effort to include a requirement for an evaluation of health risks and benefits associated with each country's INDCs - one of the recommendations of the Global Climate and Health Alliance in its ['Health in 2015 and Beyond'](#) paper) remains ongoing. The Australian negotiating team advise there is will be a number of opportunities to see this language strengthened in future, so #climatehealth advocates must continue their efforts to ensure specific references to this are included in future, so Parties are held accountable for evaluating how their climate policies will affect people's health and wellbeing.

Global Climate and Health Alliance Strategy meetings 2nd & 6th December 2015

CAHA is a founding member of the Global Climate and Health Alliance, established in Durban in 2011 following the first Global Climate and Health Summit. A steering group with representatives from groups leading climate and health advocacy around the world has been guiding the work of the Alliance since, led by GCHA Convenor Nick Watts and supported by Isobel (Izzy) Braithwaite. With the support of the World Health Organisation Nick and Izzy have convened annual summits every year since 2011, and with Natrisha Barnett, convened the 2015 Global Climate and Health Summit in Paris.

GCHA Alliance members met in Paris to discuss the establishment of a formal governance framework for the Alliance, and prepare for the appointment of a new lead convenor, as Nick Watts prepares to lead the new Wellcome Trust initiative to implement the recommendations of the 2015 Lancet Commission 'Countdown to 2030'.



Two GCHA strategy meetings were held in Paris on 2nd and 6th December, with an inaugural GCHA board established. The board will be constituted of representatives of the organisations who have led the Alliance's work to date, and include national climate and health alliances (CAHA, Australia; and US CAHA), international

organisations (Health Care Without Harm; Health and Environment Alliance; International Federation of Medical Students Association), national climate and health bodies (Climate and Health Council UK; Ora Taiao, Climate and Health Council, NZ), and national groups leading advocacy on climate and health (Canadian Association for Physicians for the Environment - CAPE). Organisations such as the World Medical Association that have contributed to GCHA's work will also be invited to join or partner with GCHA. Special provision has been made in the structure of the board to allow for greater geographic diversity, with four (currently vacant) board positions reserved for groups with a significant focus on climate and health advocacy from low and middle income countries from Africa, South America, Asia, and Small Island Developing States.

A process has been established to recruit a new Convenor for the Global Climate and Health Alliance and lead its work for the next 12-24 months. GCHA will be seeking an outstanding candidate to follow in the footsteps of its inaugural convenor – if you are interested or know someone, contact Fiona Armstrong fiona.armstrong@caha.org.au



L-R: Kathy Dervin (US Climate and Health Alliance - USCAHA), Robin Stott (UK Climate and Health Council), Nick Watts (GCHA), Alex McMillan (Ora Taiao, NZ), Josh Karliner (Health Care Without Harm - HCWH), Alice McGushin (International Federation of Medical Students Association - IFMSA), Kit Moran IFMSA), Genon Jensen (HEAL), Liz Wiley (World Medical Association - WMA), Alejandra Livschitz (HCWH), Linda Rudolph (USCAHA), Peter Orris (World Federation of Public Health Associations), Fiona Armstrong (Climate and Health Alliance - CAHA Australia).

L-R Kneeling: Isobel Braithwaite (GCHA), Courtney Howard (Canadian Association for Physicians for the Environment - CAPE), Yassan Tcholakov (WMA), Renzo Guinto (HCWH - Asia), Gary Cohen (HCWH).

Health Care Climate Leadership Roundtable - 3 December 2015

CAHA Vice President Peter Sainsbury attended an invitation only Roundtable during COP21 at Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris organised by Health Care Without Harm and Assistance Publique Hôpitaux de Paris. The event brought together top health system officials from the US, Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and Australia to discuss strategies to accelerate carbon footprint reduction in the health care sector, scale up climate leadership and build collective impact.

At the Roundtable, U.S. system [Dignity Health announced](#) it was joining Gundersen Health System and the British and Canadian Medical Association in divesting from coal. By doing so, Dignity as health leaders in the fossil fuel divestment movement. Several health systems also signed the [2020 Challenge](#), including French hosts APHP, the global health care group BUPA, Vivantes Hospital in Berlin, BUND—a group of 25 hospitals leading the low carbon health care movement in Germany, and the Public Health Foundation of India.

Health Professionals in Action for Healthy Energy and Climate - 4 December 2015

The Health and Environment Alliance Europe (HEAL) in collaboration with the Conseil National de l'Ordre des Médecins (CNOM), the World Medical Association (WMA) and the International Federation of Medical Students Association (IFMSA) hosted on 4th December 2015 during COP21 in Paris to give leading thinkers an opportunity to discuss “Health professionals in action for Healthy Energy and Climate”. The goal was to share experiences from the health sector in making transparent and widely known the health costs of fossil fuels, the subsidies afforded to unhealthy energy and key opportunities for divestment as solutions to reduce global threats to public health and reach a healthy energy future.

A link to the program is available here: http://env-health.org/IMG/pdf/27112015_agenda_4_dec_event_healthy_energy_and_climate_final.pdf

CAHA Executive Director Fiona Armstrong was invited to speak on CAHA's work in health and energy advocacy in Australia – you can read the transcript of her presentation to the meeting here: <http://caha.org.au/the-health-implications-of-energy-choices-in-australia/>

The event was live-streamed via YouTube and a video of the meeting is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ho5YBTf0OnY>

The following link leads to an article published in Outreach, the widely read publication produced during the COP, by HEAL Executive Director Genon Jensen, about the event and why health concerns should prompt ambitious global and national climate and energy policy:

<http://outreach.stakeholderforum.org/index.php/previous-editions/cop-21-paris/11887-why-health-concerns-should-prompt-an-ambitious-paris-package>

Climate and Healthcare Conference - 4 December 2015

This conference organized by Health Care Without Harm with the French Hospital Federation showcased examples of hospitals and health systems from around the world that are working to reduce their carbon footprint.

A series of awards were announced at the conference, recognizing the climate commitments made by hospitals and health services participating in the 2020 Health Care Climate Challenge internationally.

Fiona Armstrong addressed the conference in a panel entitled: Governance and Financing the Energy Transition. You can read a transcript of her presentation here: <http://caha.org.au/paris1/>



L-R: Susan Vickers, Vice President, Corporate Responsibility, Dignity Health, United States; Joe Griffin, Head of Environment and Environmental Wellbeing at BUPA, United Kingdom; Didier Bourdon, Assistance Publique Hopitaux de Paris (AP-HP), France; Fiona Armstrong, Climate and Health Alliance, Australia

Global Climate and Health Summit - 5th December

This high-profile all day summit held in Paris during COP21 was organized by the Global Climate and Health Alliance (GCHA) and supported by the World Health Organization (WHO). This built on previous GCHA events held in parallel to the climate negotiations in Durban, Lima and Warsaw and a series of other events. Facilitated by the Guardian's John Vidal, the 2015 Summit featured leading health voices from around the world, and included an acknowledgement of the outstanding work of the GCHA team, in particular its Convenor and Lancet 2015 Health and Climate Commission lead author Nick Watts.



The Summit concluded with a session highlighting the breadth of advocacy on climate change in the health and medical community, with over 1,700 health organizations, 8,200 hospitals and health facilities, and 13 million health professionals represented as signatories to several COP21 climate and health campaigns, demonstrating a massive global consensus for climate action with the global health and medical professions.

A GCHA webinar on communicating about climate change through the health frame available via the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RrovD7Ez2KM>

More photos and videos from the Summit coming soon!