

# **Maine Health Care Professionals Call for Strong, Science-Based Climate Change Legislation**

June 22, 2009

Dear Senator Collins,

We, the undersigned Maine health care professionals, are writing to express our serious concern about continued U.S. inaction to address the growing public health threat of global climate change. We know you have been an outspoken advocate for addressing the threat of global climate change and we thank you for it. We now urge you to continue your leadership to support national legislation requiring mandatory controls to slow and stop the emission of heat-trapping greenhouse gases.

**Maine's health care community calls for immediate action to address the threats posed by global warming for the following reasons:**

- Climate change threatens the basic elements of life for both present and future generations, including food, water, shelter, clean air and health;
- Declining crop yields, especially in the poorest countries of the world, could leave many millions without the ability to produce or purchase enough food to sustain healthy life;
- Climate change-induced sea level rises, flooding and drought will likely lead to the displacement and suffering of hundreds of millions of people and could spark national or international conflict;
- Scientific evidence indicates that climate change will increase the spread of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue fever;
- Most of the health burden of climate change is borne by women and children in developing countries;
- Substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are urgently required to reduce the risks of serious climate change; and
- In the countries responsible for most greenhouse gas emissions, policies to reduce carbon emissions have the potential to bring important public health benefits through increases in physical activity, improvements in air quality, increased home energy efficiency and the adoption of diets that contain fewer animal products.

**In order to prevent this growing public health threat it is necessary to dramatically reduce the emission of greenhouse gases on a global level. As a primary contributor to global warming, it is necessary for the U.S. to adopt mandatory regulations that control the emission of greenhouse gases.**

Addressing global warming should be seen not just as a responsibility, but also as an opportunity. It is an opportunity to increase our nation's energy security, boost our nation's economic competitiveness and create healthier communities.

As health care professionals deeply concerned about the health of our nation, we ask that you and your colleagues seize this opportunity by immediately enacting legislation to slow, stop and reverse the emission of greenhouse gases.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Maine Health Care Professionals Call for Strong, Science-Based Climate Change Legislation

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