

Proposed standard on minimising the health risks of climate change for inclusion on the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (2015 revision)

The evidence is clear that climate change poses risks to the safety and quality of patient care. Thus climate change should be included in the risks that need “integrated systems of governance” as in Standard 1 of the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards.

Standard 1

Governance and quality improvement systems

There are integrated systems of governance to actively manage patient safety and quality risks.

Proposed new standard

Minimising the health risks of climate change

Organisation wide planning and systems reduce risks from the impacts of climate change to the health of patients and to the delivery of safe, quality care.

This criterion could be achieved by:	Actions required:
<p>1. Performing a risk assessment of the impacts of climate change on the health service organisation and on the community it serves.</p> <p>2. Developing an organisation-wide climate change adaptation plan</p>	<p>1.1 The risk assessment considers at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● greater rates of injuries, disease and deaths associated with: more intense heatwaves and fires and other extreme weather events ● increased risks of food and water borne diseases ● health consequences arising from lost work capacity associated with extreme weather ● deleterious impacts on community mental health ● increasing air pollution <p>2.1 The plan includes strategies to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● partial or total destruction of the health service organisation structures and equipment ● increased service demand caused by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ extreme weather events ○ changing patterns of diseases ○ increasing incidence of infectious and vector borne diseases ○ exacerbation of chronic illnesses

<p>3 Educating health service staff and the community on the risks to health from climate change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o increased incidence of respiratory illnesses ● interference with service delivery through adverse impacts on personnel ● disruptions to supply chains, electricity services, and water supplies ● compromised safety and quality of food <p>3.1 An education program that provides staff with skills to anticipate and respond to the risks to patients' health and to the health service caused by climate change.</p> <p>3.2 Community awareness programs to skill the community to understand the risks of climate change and to understand their role and responsibilities in minimising risks to health.</p>
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