Expectations of Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) in Addressing Global Climate Change and the Impact on the Physical and Mental Health of Older Adults

Valerie K. Sabol, PhD, MBA, ACNP-BC, GNP-BC, ANEF, FAANP, FAAN

Daniel J. Smith, PhD, AGPCNP-BC, CNE, FAAN

Milagros Elia, MA, APRN, ANP-BC

Ann Kriebel-Gasparro, DrNP, CRNP, FNP-BC, GNP-BC, GS-C, FAANP

Purpose

In response to the World Health Organization (WHO) statement that 'climate change is the biggest health threat facing humanity' (World Health Organization, 2023), the American Nurses Association (ANA) published a landmark position statement recognizing the critically important role nurses must play in effectively addressing global climate change, climate justice, and health (American Nurses Association, 2023). To provide consistency, readers are referred to definitions and relevant policies within the ANA's Position Statement. Notably, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) underscores the importance of global action now, to rapidly and effectively decrease greenhouse gas emissions; to do otherwise will result in irreparable damage to our planet's ecosystems and devasting consequences to human health, both of which are inextricably linked. The Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association (GAPNA) recognizes these data-driven international and national calls to action and responds with this White Paper that acknowledges the negative impacts of climate change on physical and mental health on its special population of interest*, our globally aging population*.

Statement of GAPNA's Position

As a leading professional organization representing the interests of advanced practice nurses (APNs), clinicians, educators, and researchers dedicated to the care of older adults, GAPNA recognizes the significant health challenges posed by climate change, with older adults often more susceptible and less resilient. To be effective, climate-informed providers, this White Paper broadly highlights the special knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary for APNs to assess, diagnose, and co-manage older adults, their families, and communities within an increasingly complex, climate-changing world. This work aligns with GAPNA's mission, vision, and goals.

Understanding the negative impacts of climate change on human health is a critical first step, particularly for vulnerable populations. Rising carbon dioxide levels, increasing air and water temperatures, rising sea levels, and more frequent extreme weather events contribute to environmental degradation, air pollution, and exposure to allergens. These factors exacerbate

health risks, including extreme heat, changes in vector-borne diseases, and compromised water and food quality. Older adults, often living with reduced physiological reserves (i.e., normal age-related changes), chronic conditions, polypharmacy, and limited resources, face heightened vulnerability to illness, injury, and infectious diseases after a lifetime of cumulative environmental stressors (Bell et al., 2024).

As health and safety advocates for individuals, communities, and populations, APNs who care for our aging population must be prepared to care for those directly and indirectly affected by climate change. This White Paper serves as a crucial resource for educators, clinicians, and researchers with the knowledge and strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate-related health risks among older adults, and to provide a framework to address climate change-related health issues in clinical practice, education, advocacy, and community engagement.

Background

The global population is aging, creating an urgent need to understand the unique vulnerabilities of older adults in the face of climate change. In the United States, adults aged 65 and older currently make up about 17% of the population—a figure projected to rise to 23% by 2050 (US Census Bureau, 2023). Globally, the number of people over 60 is expected to double by 2050, reaching approximately 2.1 billion (World Health Organization, 2024). This demographic shift, combined with climate challenges like extreme heat, wildfires, hurricanes, floods, and changing infection patterns, are projected to contribute to an additional 250,000 deaths each year worldwide from 2030 to 2050 (Prina et al., 2024). Not only does climate change affect the longevity of older adults, but it also impairs their ability to age healthily.

APNs play a crucial role in addressing the health impacts of climate change on older adults through interdisciplinary practice, education, advocacy, and community engagement. APNs, with their advanced clinical expertise and holistic care approach, are uniquely positioned to lead initiatives that promote resilience against climate-related health challenges. The document emphasizes integrating climate science into geriatric nursing education, practice, and research. APNs must proactively respond to environmental health risks, such as heat stress, respiratory illnesses, and infectious diseases, which disproportionately affect older adults with pre-existing conditions. Additionally, this paper provides evidence-based strategies for incorporating environmental determinants of health (EDOH) into clinical assessments, enabling a more comprehensive approach to patient care (Rabinowitz & Barry, 2024).

Partnerships with other Professional Organizations

A core strategy includes building partnerships with professional organizations like the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments (ANHE) to enhance advocacy, research, and clinical practice related to climate change. These collaborations offer GAPNA members access to valuable resources, empowering them to address the complex challenges climate change poses to the

health of older populations. By fostering these partnerships, APNs can educate patients and communities, advocate for policy changes, and implement care strategies that improve health outcomes and promote resilience. These efforts align with the broader goal of preparing APNs to lead in a healthcare system increasingly impacted by environmental changes.

Overview of Climate Change and Health Impacts on Aging, Older Adults

Climate change poses a wide range of health challenges for aging populations, impacting older adults both directly (i.e., the immediate, physical consequences of climate-related events) and indirectly (i.e., the secondary or cascading effects that are not immediately caused by climate events). Acute conditions and exacerbation of chronic conditions are driven by extreme weather events, environmental degradation, and shifting ecological patterns, making older adults particularly vulnerable due to age-related physiological changes, chronic health conditions, and social vulnerabilities. The following section outlines some of the ways in which climate change impacts the health and well-being of older adults.

Direct Impacts

Heat-Related Illnesses

Heat waves are becoming increasingly frequent and severe (Perkins-Kirkpatrick & Lewis, 2020), with rising trends in heat-related mortality in the United States (Howard et al., 2024), underscoring the heightened vulnerability of older adults. High heat conditions now cause more fatalities annually than all other natural disasters combined (Adams-Fuller, 2023). Older adults are particularly susceptible to extreme heat, which can result in heat stress, dehydration, and heat stroke (Mueller et al., 2024). This vulnerability is driven by age-related physiological changes, including reduced thermoregulation due to decreased sweating (Millyard et al., 2020), the prevalence of chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases (Gostimirovic et al., 2020), and the effects of polypharmacy. Certain medications, such as anticholinergics, beta-blockers, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, are known to increase the risk of heat-related illnesses (Mueller et al., 2024).

APNs must consider environmental heat exposure when prescribing medications. Adjustments to prescribing patterns should account for increased risks, particularly for patients living without air conditioning, in urban areas lacking green spaces, in poorly ventilated or insecure housing, and those on multiple medications that elevate vulnerability to heat-related illnesses.

Cardiovascular and Respiratory Stress

Rising temperatures and worsening air quality, driven by increased pollutants such as particulate matter and ozone, exacerbate cardiovascular and respiratory conditions commonly affecting older adults (Figueiredo et al., 2024). Climate change increases pollen production and shifting pollen seasons further intensify allergy symptoms (Anderegg et al., 2021). Individuals with preexisting conditions, including asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and heart disease, face heightened risks of hospitalization and mortality during heat waves and periods of poor air quality (Alahmad et al., 2023; Duan et al., 2020). In COPD, respiratory

irritants directly worsen symptoms such as coughing and sputum production (Ryu et al., 2024). Cardiovascular complications linked to rising temperatures are responsible for nearly 20% of all heat-related deaths (US EPA, 2016b).

To mitigate the impact of climate-related cardiovascular and respiratory stress, APNs can leverage tools like air quality indices (AQI) (Horn & Dasgupta, 2024) and heat alerts (HEAT.Gov - National Integrated Heat Health Information System, n.d.) to monitor environmental conditions and advise patients on precautionary measures. Additionally, APNs can implement telehealth visits during extreme weather events, reducing patients' exposure to harmful environmental conditions while ensuring continuity of care for those with underlying health vulnerabilities.

Increased Vulnerability to Natural Disasters

The increasing frequency of climate-related extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, floods, and wildfires, poses significant risks to older adults (Kriebel-Gasparro, 2022). These events can lead to trauma and injuries (Kaniasty, 2020), displacement (National Institute on Aging, 2022), and disruptions in healthcare services (National Institute on Aging, 2022), complicating the management of chronic conditions and access to essential medical care. Emergency response systems often overlook the specific needs of older adults, resulting in delayed evacuations and increased mortality rates during disasters (Phraknoi et al., 2023).

APNs play a critical role in helping older adults and their caregivers prepare for natural disasters by creating personalized disaster preparedness plans. These plans should include evacuation routes, a list of essential medications, and contact information for healthcare providers and emergency services. APNs can also ensure that older adults are equipped with an emergency "go-bag" containing a supply of medications, necessary medical equipment (e.g., oxygen tanks, glucose monitors), and personal essentials to sustain them for several days.

Food and Water Security

Climate change disrupts agriculture and water supplies, leading to shortages of food and clean water (Toromade et al., 2024). Older adults, particularly those on fixed incomes or with chronic health conditions, are especially vulnerable to malnutrition and dehydration (Bardon et al., 2021). These challenges are further compounded in low-income or rural areas, where food deserts are prevalent (Sigalo et al., 2022) and water infrastructure is often inadequate (Mullin, 2020). The scarcity of nutrient-dense foods and clean water heightens these risks.

APNs play a critical role in mitigating these challenges by advocating for expanded food assistance programs, supporting water safety initiatives, and promoting community-based interventions to improve access to healthy foods and clean water. During extreme weather events, APNs can take proactive measures to ensure access to hydration and nutrition resources, reducing the health risks associated with climate-related food and water insecurity.

Vector-Borne Diseases

The geographic range of vector-borne diseases, such as mosquito-transmitted dengue and Zika or tick-borne Lyme disease, is expanding due to climate change (Beard et al., 2024; Chala & Hamde, 2021). While older adults may not be primary targets, they are at heightened risk of severe complications due to aging immune systems that respond less effectively to infections (Ruiz et al., 2020). For example, mosquito-borne diseases can cause severe neurological effects and functional decline in older adults. APNs can educate older adults on protective measures, including the use of insect repellents, appropriate clothing, and vaccinations when available. They can also advocate for improved disease surveillance and vector control efforts in vulnerable communities.

Indirect Impacts

Mental Health Strain

The psychological impact of climate change, including extreme heat, floods, fires, and hurricanes, poses significant risks to older adults. These events increase the likelihood of anxiety, PTSD, and depression (White et al., 2023). Older adults are particularly affected due to factors such as home loss, social isolation, and heightened stress (White et al., 2023). Extreme heat can exacerbate psychiatric conditions, while displacement often worsens confusion and distress in individuals with dementia. Natural disasters may also accelerate cognitive decline (Önder, 2024).

Ecoanxiety, recently reframed as "environmental moral distress," reflects feelings of responsibility, powerlessness, and guilt related to climate change and its effects on personal and global health. APNs should provide trauma-informed care, addressing loss, helplessness, and anxiety. They can incorporate mental health screenings into routine care, particularly in disaster-prone areas, and utilize tools to assess anxiety, depression, PTSD, and cognitive decline. Referrals to mental health professionals and emotional support resources are critical components of care.

Impact on Caregivers

Many older adults rely on caregivers who are themselves affected by climate change. Caregivers face challenges such as displacement (El-Khani et al., 2020), economic strain (Reinhard & Feinberg, 2020), and health issues (Liu et al., 2020), which can impair their ability to provide consistent care. These challenges, compounded by isolation and increased stress, may result in reduced care quality and heightened risks for older adults.

APNs should provide trauma-informed support to both caregivers and patients. Strategies include offering mental health resources, promoting respite care, and fostering social networks to reduce caregiver burden and isolation.

Adaptive Capacity of Older Adults During Climate Change

Adaptive capacity is the capacity to adjust to changes in climate in order to moderate potential damage, take advantage of opportunities, or cope with consequences (Rhoades et al., 2018). There are numerous factors which can impact the ability of older to adapt to climate change. Diminished adaptive capacity places older adults at high risk for experiencing persistent vulnerability in the aftermath of a disaster. Older adults are more likely to be socially isolated. Among Americans age 65 or older, about one-third of Medicare enrollees, or approximately 16 million nationally live alone (Shih et al., 2018). Social isolation is a significant risk factor for death during extreme heat events (Orlando et al., 2021).

Physical

Older adults are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to several physical factors. Preexisting health conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes, and respiratory issues, can be exacerbated by extreme weather events, leading to increased morbidity and mortality. Additionally, decreased mobility and functional capacity make it more challenging for older individuals to escape or cope with disasters like floods, heatwaves, or hurricanes (Leffers, 2023). These limitations can hinder their ability to evacuate quickly, access necessary medical care, or navigate challenging environments during emergencies. As a result, older adults face heightened risks during climate-related events, necessitating targeted interventions to support their safety and well-being (US EPA, 2016c). APNs should implement targeted interventions to address these vulnerabilities, to include co-development of a personalized disaster preparedness plan.

Social

Social isolation significantly heightens the vulnerability of older adults in the context of climate change. Displacement from rising sea levels, extreme weather events, or environmental degradation can sever social connections, leading to feelings of loneliness and abandonment, which negatively impact both mental and physical health. During climate-related disruptions, older adults may become isolated from their communities and support networks, particularly in rural or underserved areas with limited resources. This lack of social interaction can exacerbate existing health issues, increase anxiety and depression (Brandt et al., 2022), and hinder recovery from disasters (Bui et al., 2021). Additionally, the challenges of relocating and adapting to new environments can deepen feelings of confusion and isolation, especially for those with cognitive impairments. Addressing social isolation is crucial for enhancing the resilience and overall well-being of older adults facing the impacts of climate change. APNs should implement targeted interventions to address these vulnerabilities, to include ensuring access to mental health care and regular screenings for cognitive and psychological health and promoting social connectedness to reduce isolation.

Economic

Older adults living on fixed incomes face significant challenges in adapting to the rising costs associated with climate resilience, such as home modifications and increased healthcare expenses (Berberian et al., 2022). Many older adults reside in inadequate housing that may not

withstand extreme weather events. Climate change puts additional financial strain on this population, as growing healthcare costs, higher food prices, and increased energy bills make it difficult to meet basic needs. Climate-related disasters also lead to property damage or loss, worsening their economic hardship. APNs should implement targeted interventions to address these vulnerabilities, including advocating for affordable climate resilience measures, such as subsidized home modifications and food assistance programs.

Role of Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs)

Training and Professional Development

Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) must receive comprehensive education to deliver climate-informed and trauma-informed care to patients, families, and communities. This includes understanding the psychological and emotional impacts of climate-related events, which can intensify trauma, particularly among vulnerable populations. APN faculty are essential in incorporating these principles into clinical practice, education, policy development, and research (Cadet, 2022). Lifelong learning and continuing education are also vital for APNs to provide safe and responsive care, emphasizing illness prevention, emergency preparedness, and trauma-informed response competencies for effective management during climate-related disasters.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing identifies understanding climate change's impact on population and environmental health as a core public health competency. Similarly, the American Nurses Association (ANA) highlights this in Standard 18, requiring proficiency in identifying, mitigating, and educating about environmental health risks to enhance population and planetary health (American Nurses Association, 2021).

Incorporating climate change education into APN curricula equips nurses with the knowledge and skills needed to address the multifaceted challenges of climate change. This preparation enables APNs to educate older adults, their families, and caregivers about the health impacts of climate change and preventive measures. Advocacy for resources and policies to protect older adults is equally critical, including securing funding for community-based programs and services tailored to their unique needs.

Community engagement is a key strategy in mitigating climate change risks for older adults. APNs can collaborate with community organizations to enhance disaster preparedness and response efforts specific to this population. Additionally, implementing community-based health programs focused on older adults' needs within the context of climate change can further reduce vulnerabilities and improve outcomes.

Research and Evidence-Based Practice

APNs should actively support and engage in research addressing the health impacts of climate change on older adults, a population particularly vulnerable to extreme weather events, heat stress, and other environmental hazards. A critical aspect of this research is epidemiological surveillance, which involves the systematic collection, analysis, and reporting of health data. By

participating in such surveillance, nurses can help identify trends and detect changes in older adults' health outcomes related to climate change (Yehya, 2024). These efforts enable the development of targeted, evidence-based interventions and facilitate timely public health responses, enhancing the resilience and well-being of older patients.

Furthermore, APNs play a pivotal role in translating research findings into clinical practice to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change on aging populations. Increasing funding for climate and health research is essential to advance this work. Such investment supports the creation of targeted mitigation and adaptation strategies, enabling APNs and other healthcare providers to develop and implement evidence-based interventions that address the unique challenges of our aging population in the face of a changing climate.

Mitigation Strategies

Role of APNs

The healthcare sector is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, responsible for 8.5% of U.S. emissions and 25% of global health sector emissions (Eckelman et al., 2020; *Practice Greenhealth*, n.d.). U.S. hospitals alone generate over 5 million tons of waste annually, averaging 29 pounds of waste per bed per day (*Practice Greenhealth*, n.d.). Reducing emissions and waste not only protects patients and communities from climate change impacts but also reduces healthcare costs and advances health equity (Health Care Without Harm, n.d.-a). Despite ongoing efforts to build resilient health systems, challenges such as inadequate policy implementation, resource constraints, and limited integration of climate considerations into healthcare hinder comprehensive adaptation, especially in developing nations (Ansah et al., 2024).

Climate and Nutrition

APNs need to recognize the impact of climate change on both global and local food supplies, as disruptions in food availability and quality can adversely affect the nutritional health of older adults (Dubois et al., 2024). The healthcare sector increasingly acknowledges the essential role of nutrition in health promotion and disease prevention. By adopting an environmental nutrition framework, APNs can guide institutional decision-making toward sustainable investments, such as supporting food systems that conserve natural resources, promote social equity, uphold animal welfare, and ensure fair access to nutritious food (Health Care Without Harm, n.d.-e).

Additionally, it is crucial to address the environmental and health risks of the industrial food system, such as dependence on synthetic pesticides, fossil-fuel fertilizers, antibiotics, hormones, and unethical labor practices (Health Care Without Harm, n.d.-e). Healthcare professionals can advocate for a food system that aligns human and environmental health with sustainable food production, distribution, and processing. Hospitals can take the lead by sourcing local, seasonal foods to promote public health-focused food systems. They can also introduce plant-forward menus that honor cultural preferences, support sustainable agriculture, and promote healthier diets (Health Care Without Harm, n.d.-b). These efforts not only enhance

patient care but also position healthcare institutions as leaders in sustainability and climate resilience.

Waste Management and Sustainability

A comprehensive waste reduction plan is critical for sustainability programming. Organizations like Practice Greenhealth provide hospitals with tools to measure and reduce various waste streams, including regulated medical, hazardous, universal, construction, demolition, solid, and food waste, as well as pharmaceutical waste. Reducing meat consumption, especially industrially produced meat, is another impactful strategy. By leveraging their purchasing power and role as health authorities, hospitals can increase access to healthier, sustainably produced food while supporting systemic transformations through local sourcing and investments (Health Care Without Harm, n.d.-c)

Legislative Incentives and Energy Efficiency

Recent legislation, including the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act (P.L. 117-169) and the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58), provides significant incentives for hospitals to lower greenhouse gas emissions (Bipartisan Policy Center, 2023). Incentives such as tax breaks, grants, rebates, and below-market loans can spur actions to reduce emissions and promote sustainability (US EPA, 2016a). Recognition programs highlight innovative solutions across public and private sectors (US EPA, 2016a).

Hospitals are encouraged to evaluate their energy consumption and implement cost-effective measures such as energy-efficient HVAC systems, diversified energy sources, and energy-use monitoring. Upgraded HVAC systems not only reduce costs but also mitigate health risks associated with smoke from wildfires and prescribed burns (US EPA, 2021). By adopting these practices, hospitals can lead efforts to reduce environmental impacts, protect patient health, and foster a more sustainable healthcare system.

APNs play a crucial role in these efforts. As trusted healthcare leaders, APNs can advocate for the adoption of sustainable practices within healthcare systems, influence policy development, and educate stakeholders about the health benefits of reducing emissions and energy consumption. They can also participate in the planning and implementation of initiatives to improve hospital energy efficiency, ensuring that patient health and safety remain a priority during transitions to sustainable systems. Additionally, APNs can leverage their clinical expertise to highlight the connections between environmental health and patient care, further driving organizational commitment to sustainability. By integrating climate-conscious practices into their roles, APNs contribute to building resilient, environmentally responsible healthcare systems.

Adaptation Strategies

Climate-related events disrupt healthcare delivery and disproportionately harm vulnerable populations. Healthcare organizations are uniquely positioned to identify and protect at-risk

groups and play a crucial role in community climate resilience. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2023), building climate resilience in healthcare involves addressing physical infrastructure vulnerabilities, anticipating community needs, and fostering partnerships to safeguard vulnerable populations. A comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach is necessary, integrating contributions from healthcare providers and community stakeholders. The World Health Organization defines a climate-resilient health system as one that can “anticipate, respond to, cope with, recover from, and adapt to climate-related shocks and stress, achieving sustained improvements in population health despite an unstable climate (World Health Organization, 2022).

APNs are key contributors to climate resilience strategies within healthcare systems. Their expertise in patient care, systems management, and community outreach positions them to lead efforts in addressing climate-related health challenges. APNs also play a critical role in identifying vulnerable populations, such as older adults, individuals with chronic illnesses, and socioeconomically disadvantaged groups. By incorporating environmental health assessments into routine care, APNs can determine who is most at risk and develop targeted interventions to mitigate these vulnerabilities.

In addition to patient-focused care, APNs can advocate for climate-resilient infrastructure improvements, such as flood-resistant buildings, energy-efficient systems, and robust emergency preparedness measures. They are instrumental in developing and implementing disaster preparedness and response plans tailored to the unique needs of their communities. These efforts require collaboration with interdisciplinary teams and community partners to ensure comprehensive and coordinated responses to climate-related events.

APNs serve as vital connectors between healthcare organizations and community stakeholders, fostering partnerships that address social and environmental determinants of health, and build overall community resilience. Through education and advocacy, they can raise awareness about the health impacts of climate change among patients, colleagues, and policymakers. By advocating for policies and practices that prioritize climate adaptation within healthcare, APNs help drive systemic change and can enhance the capacity of healthcare systems to withstand climate-related challenges. Their contributions not only improve infrastructure and preparedness but also lead to better health outcomes for vulnerable populations, ensuring that healthcare systems remain sustainable and effective in the face of an increasingly unstable climate.

Policy Recommendations to Protect the Health of Older Adults from Climate Change

Strengthening Policies and Healthcare Systems

Local and national policy changes are critical to mitigating the health risks of climate change for older adults. APNs, with their unique insights and community connections, can collaborate with interdisciplinary teams to advocate for policies that enhance climate resilience and protect vulnerable populations. A key focus should be on developing and maintaining climate-resilient

healthcare infrastructure to ensure healthcare systems can withstand extreme weather events and environmental hazards. This is particularly important for safeguarding older adults, who are at increased risk for poor health outcomes.

Integrating Climate Considerations into Healthcare

Incorporating climate change considerations into healthcare regulations and clinical guidelines is essential for proactive health risk management. Embedding climate resilience into healthcare standards can better prepare systems to address challenges such as heat waves, declining air quality, and severe weather events. APNs play a pivotal role in advocating for such policy changes and promoting climate-informed healthcare delivery. Within clinical settings, APNs should lead initiatives to implement sustainable practices, such as environmentally conscious procurement and supply chain strategies, and foster a culture of environmental stewardship within healthcare systems.

Personalized Climate Risk Assessments

APNs can enhance patient care by integrating climate risk assessments into routine health check-ups for older adults. These assessments can identify risks related to extreme heat, poor air or water quality, and other environmental factors, enabling the development of tailored treatment plans. Adjusting medication regimens and interventions based on environmental risks is particularly important for older adults, who often have multiple chronic conditions exacerbated by climate change. For example, while the Heat-Related Illness Screening Tool (HIST) is a valuable resource (Bernhardt et al., 2023), there is a need for a specialized assessment tool that addresses the unique vulnerabilities of older adults, including age-related physiological changes, polypharmacy, and pre-existing health conditions.

Disaster Management and Preparedness

Effective disaster preparedness is crucial for protecting older adults in a changing climate. APNs should educate patients on creating personalized "Go Bags" containing essential medications, medical supplies, and emergency contact information. Proactive planning ensures older adults are better equipped to handle climate-related disruptions, such as power outages or mandatory evacuations. Additionally, medication management strategies must account for potential challenges in accessing healthcare services during emergencies to ensure continuity of care. To safeguard older adults during heat waves, healthcare providers should conduct home assessments to identify cooling needs and establish community outreach programs that connect vulnerable individuals to cooling centers and other resources. These measures can significantly reduce health risks and improve outcomes for older adults in the face of climate-related challenges.

Conclusion

APNs are uniquely positioned to address the health impacts of climate change on older adults. By integrating climate-informed care into clinical practice, advocating for policy changes, and

engaging in research and education, APNs can help safeguard the health and well-being of this often-vulnerable population. A coordinated approach involving clinical care, education, advocacy, community engagement, and policy reform is necessary to build resilient healthcare systems capable of adapting to the challenges posed by climate change. Collaboration among healthcare providers, policymakers, and community organizations is essential to implement these strategies effectively. It is imperative that APNs adopt proactive measures and continuous practice improvements to mitigate the health impacts of climate change, ensuring that older adults receive the comprehensive, climate-informed care they need. By leveraging their unique knowledge and skills, APNs can play a critical role in safeguarding the health of older populations in the face of a changing climate.

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