

Spotlight on Climate Change

Lister Hill Center for Health Policy, 2022

Overview

The mission of the Lister Hill Center for Health Policy (LHC) is to connect and support those seeking to improve health outcomes through policy. Our aims include enhancing opportunities for policy collaboration through education, creating opportunities for dissemination of information, providing reputable data sources for academic research, and empowering students and community leaders to affect policy change. In 2019 the LHC hosted its first Semester Spotlight, a semester-long seminar series centered around a particular topic at the intersection of public health and public policy. In 2022, this shifted to a year-long focus.

With our Spotlight series, we provide public health professionals, students, policymakers, and community members with the opportunity to explore a public health issue and its policy implications. Our 2022 Spotlight centered around the intersections of climate change and public health. Together with our partners, the LHC hosted eight events focusing on this topic. Below is a summary our 2022 Spotlight activities, followed by engagement statistics.

Spotlight Events

January 27, Constructive Communication: How to Have Difficult Conversations

Why is it so hard to have conversations on difficult topics like climate change? This event featured **Dr. Adam Brooks, co-founder of Engineered to Speak and Director of the Speaking Studio at The University of Alabama**, who discussed how we can use critical communication skills to successfully navigate difficult and controversial issues.

Link to Recorded Webinar: https://youtu.be/P6-au7XYp_4

February 16, Climate-Smart Agriculture: What is it and how does it impact our health?

Dr. Eri Saikawa, Associate Professor of Environmental Health Sciences at Emory University, presented her research on nitrous oxide and the importance of agriculture in reference to climate change. Dr. Saikawa's work was recently cited in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report.

Watch the recording here: <https://youtu.be/aRZPlomRe-4>

March 9, Local Action: How the Urgency of Climate Change is Impacting Birmingham

How do we combat a global issue like climate change at the local level? What is being done to protect the city of Birmingham from air pollution and environmental hazards? In this webinar, the **Greater Birmingham Alliance to Stop Pollution (GASP)** presented a detailed look at the national, regional, and local implications of climate change policy and what you can do to get involved.

Watch the recording here: <https://youtu.be/EWRvPbC89Tk>

April 12, Code Red for a Healthy Future: The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change

Anthropogenic climate change threatens to undermine the last 50 years of gains in public health, exacerbating inequalities and impacting the most on the world's vulnerable. Yet, delivering the necessary mitigation and adaptation response, together with their associated health co-benefits, could be the greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century. **The Lancet Countdown: Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change** is an international, multi-disciplinary research collaboration that exists to monitor the world's response to this unprecedented challenge, and the health benefits that emerge from this transition. It draws on the expertise of 43 leading academic and UN institutions from around the world, providing annual updates on 44 indicators spanning across five key domains: the health impacts of climate change; progress on adaptation for health; mitigation actions and health co-benefits; economics and finance; and public and political engagement. Publishing its findings in The Lancet prior to the UN's Climate Change Negotiations each year, the initiative aims to provide robust scientific evidence to put health at the center of an accelerated response to climate change.

Watch the recording here: <https://youtu.be/QqM7LYUhDKU>

May 4, Climate-Disease Connections: Associations, Processes and Incorporation in Infectious Disease Forecast

For this event, **Dr. Jeffrey Shaman, director of the Climate and Health Program at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health**, explored the relationship between disease systems and the broader effects of climate and weather on human health.

Link to Recorded Webinar: <https://youtu.be/bkL1H9Lp0uI>

September 7, A Changing World: Communicating Climate Change and Influencing Policy

To kick off the fall semester, we hosted a half-day symposium bringing together a diverse group of speakers with a wide range of experiences moving the needle on climate change policy. Speakers and presentations included:

Jay Knott, Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Environmental Defense Fund

“Connecting the Dots: Why the Climate Crisis is a Public Health Emergency”

Mr. Knott oversees human resources, finance, legal and compliance, corporate services, global operations and IT. He started his career as an attorney with the Justice Department's Environmental Enforcement division and currently serves on the Board of Directors at Results for Development and the Society for International Development, United States. He holds a BA from Yale University and a JD from the University of Pennsylvania.

Emily Northrop, Ph.D., Advocate with Citizen's Climate Lobby and other organizations

“Climate Change: Lend a Hand!”

Drawing largely on a range of firsthand experiences, Dr. Northrop presented several opportunities for people to contribute to climate stabilization, from driving institutional changes to modifying personal lifestyle choices. Many of these efforts offer rewards beyond their climate impacts. Some actions are costly, but others, including one of the most critical, is perfectly free: Talk about climate change! Dr. Northrop concluded the presentation by offering some bases for hope.

Beth Karlin, Ph.D., Founder and CEO, See Change Institute

“People Matter: A Behavioral Science Approach to Thinking about Climate Change”

Understanding human behavior and decision-making is essential to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon future, whether in program design, diversity, equity and inclusion, or marketing. In this talk, Dr. Karlin shared strategies and insights from behavioral science to help us make sure we are aligning people with our programs and policies for a clean and equitable climate for all.

Pat Byington, Content Director at Bham Now

“Activism in Climate Change”

Drawing from his many years in climate change and environmental activism, Mr. Byington presented a unique insight into the role of the media in activism and present a life-applicable approach to creating change.

Recorded presentations are unavailable at this time. [Subscribe to our YouTube channel](#) for updates!

September 28, Progress Via Process: How Good Policy Follows Good Politics

Former Arkansas Representative Warwick Sabin gave a presentation on why a clear understanding of how legislative bodies function is the prerequisite for achieving desired policy outcomes. According to Sabin, this is usually overlooked or sidelined in favor of ephemeral point-scoring in the public discourse. Real measurable progress is achieved only through strategy, political cultivation, and compromise – which is how our government was originally designed, and which is why it is so dysfunctional today.

A recording for this seminar is unavailable due to technical issues.

November 30, A Local Lens: How Environmental Policy is Impacting Birmingham

This panel discussion featured representatives from the business, local government, and nonprofit sectors. Our goal in hosting this event was to promote productive and actionable discussions of local environmental policy. We provided a sustainable lunch from Blueroot Co, a Gold Sustainable Partner with the Alabama Environmental Council. Speakers included **James Little (co-owner, Filter Coffee Parlor)**, **Thomas Yuill (senior planner, City of Birmingham)**, **Victoria Miller (advocacy assistant, Alabama Rivers Alliance)**, and **Nelson Brooke (Black Warrior Riverkeeper)**.

Link to Recording: https://youtu.be/Gf_-WtMQgA4

Related Publications

The Widespread Impact of Eco-Anxiety

Excerpt: Climate change has been gathering large amounts of attention in recent years. Since the late twentieth century, temperatures have been rising, and 2020 was the second warmest year in recorded history... With the climate changing so rapidly, many people are becoming anxious about their future and future generations, a phenomenon often called eco-anxiety. Eco-anxiety is experienced more extensively by today’s youth. In a large study done with 10,000 young adults, more than half of those that participated were worried for their future.

Link to Article: <https://www.uab.edu/listerhillcenter/publications/blog?view=article&id=181>

A Conversation with Dr. Eri Saikawa

Excerpt: The Lister Hill Center for Health Policy recently hosted Dr. Eri Saikawa for a seminar on climate-smart agriculture and the impact of urban gardening on public health. Dr. Saikawa's research includes evaluating the impact of fertilizer on air quality and how heavy metal toxicity in the soil of formerly red-lined neighborhoods has public health implications on the communities of Atlanta.

Link to Article: <https://www.uab.edu/listerhillcenter/publications/blog?view=article&id=184>

Policy Review: Alabama's Push Toward Electric Vehicles

Excerpt: Electric vehicles have been receiving a lot of attention in the previous years. There are many more fully electric vehicles and hybrid cars on the road in the past year compared to five years ago... [Alabama's Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment] grant program provides funds to expand electric vehicle infrastructure.

Link to Article: <https://www.uab.edu/listerhillcenter/publications/blog?view=article&id=187>

Policy Review: Climate Change Initiatives in the Deep South

Excerpt: Local and state governments are adopting standards in alliance with national standards to address local power plants and vehicle emissions. Additionally, there are various organizations that are aiming to address climate change from the local level.

Link to Article: <https://www.uab.edu/listerhillcenter/publications/blog?view=article&id=188>

Policy Review: Birmingham Bus Rapid Transit System

Excerpt: For many, public transit ensures access to education, employment, health care, and more. Therefore, an affordable and cost-effective form of public transportation is crucial for cities to consider... The Birmingham Xpress will enable residents to access healthcare, education, and employment. The transit system is expected to run through UAB, various health care facilities, and through the city itself where multiple large employers exist.

Link to Article: <https://www.uab.edu/listerhillcenter/publications/blog?view=article&id=193>

Describing the Implementation of Urban Walking Trails in Birmingham, Alabama

Excerpt: Recently, green spaces have experienced a resurgence in their development and popularity in large American cities. Following this trend, the City of Birmingham has seen a large network of greenways develop within the last decade. These greenspaces provide additional means of transportation and exercise for residents while connecting urban neighborhoods to the forested outskirts of the city. The partnership that the City of Birmingham has developed with the Freshwater Land Trust, a local land conservancy, has been very successful and can serve as a model for the development of greenways in other American cities.

Link to Article: <https://www.uab.edu/listerhillcenter/publications/briefs-reports?view=article&id=202&catid=34>

Policy Proposal: Establishment of an Urban Climate Corps in the City of Birmingham

Excerpt: The implementation of a program like the Urban Climate Corps in Birmingham would intersect economic, environmental, health, and social impacts through its interactive functionality. The City of Birmingham can increase its employment opportunities for BIPOC youth and worker retention, expand

public-private partnerships to garner funding on capital projects, and improve talent retention in our workforce. This program highlights innovations within sustainable housing construction, stormwater infrastructure, urban tree canopy, as well as other environmental resilience efforts. In regard to health, the work being done will lead to the reduction of environmental health hazards and support healthy living and built environment.

Link to Article: <https://www.uab.edu/listerhillcenter/publications/briefs-reports?view=article&id=196&catid=34>

Engagement Statistics

On average, each spotlight event had 72 attendees, with a total of 573 participants across the eight events. The table below provides data on the number of registrants, attendees, and YouTube views as of December 1. Attendee reports are available upon request.

Spotlight Event Engagement				
Date	Event (short title)	Registered	Attended	Post-event Views
1/27	Constructive Communication	291	167	220
2/16	Climate-Smart Agriculture	72	48	64
3/9	Local Action	62	42	55
4/12	Code Red for a Healthy Future	59	51	133
5/4	Climate-Disease Connections	100	65	80
9/7	A Changing World Symposium	87	90 (35 ⁱ , 55 ^v)	--
9/28	Progress Via Process	34 (19 ⁱ , 15 ^v)	41 (32 ⁱ , 9 ^v)	--
11/30	A Local Lens	80 (62 ⁱ , 18 ^v)	69 (49 ⁱ , 20 ^v)	--

Note: For hybrid events, *i* indicates in-person attendees and *v* indicates virtual attendees.

Publications averaged 392 hits. The table below provides the number of hits for each article.

Related Publications Engagement	
Title	Hits
The Widespread Impact of Eco-Anxiety	690
A Conversation with Dr. Eri Saikawa	403
Policy Review: Alabama's Push Toward Electric Vehicles	452
Policy Review: Climate Change Initiatives in the Deep South	473
Policy Review: Birmingham Bus Rapid Transit System	492
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