

**What can health  
and social services  
do to help improve  
clients' health  
outcomes in this  
changing climate?**



# How is climate impacting our clients?

- Impacts on physical health due to heat/cold exposure, injuries from storms/extreme weather events, mosquito borne disease, water borne disease, thunderstorm asthma, etc.
- Impacts on ability to manage health conditions due to limited access to usual health services and other support services during extreme weather events.
- Impacts on mental health due to increased anxiety surrounding potential extreme weather events.
- All of the above are heightened for vulnerable people, youth and the elderly.

# How is climate impacting our staff and services?

- Staff may be unable to deliver services during extreme weather events such as fires and floods.
- Staff may experience increased stress through worrying about their clients and feeling like they need to be checking in with clients during extreme weather events.
- Staff may also experience extreme weather events making them unable to attend their place of work and provide service to clients for prolonged times.
- Impacts on service centres to be able to deliver services due to floods, fires, power outages or impacts on access to water.
- Increased demand on health services with more people requiring admissions due heat/cold exposure or water/mosquito borne disease.

# Potential actions for consideration with staff/organisations

- Increasing staff awareness of existing policies and procedures within their organisation.
- Review or creation of policies and procedures including emergency response planning, continuity planning and staff emergency leave planning.
- Collaborative critical service planning for each local area with other services to understand what services will be available for different extreme weather events and who will be responsible for what.
- Increasing awareness with staff about climate change and how their services are adapting to this change to continue to support clients.
- Educating staff about new diseases being seen in the area such as water borne and mosquito borne disease that may not usually be present in the area including how to identify and treat the diseases.
- Raise staff awareness of how to recognise mental health issues in their clients and where to refer them for mental health service provision.

# Potential actions for consideration with clients

- Education with clients about the impacts of climate change on their health and how to reduce their risk of heat/cold exposure, water borne or mosquito borne disease, thunderstorm asthma and other climate related health issues or exasperations.
- Pre-prepared emergency packs that are held in the client's home and contain any items they would need to manage their health conditions should they become cut off from services (i.e. medication, insulin, wound dressings, etc. – including health literate instructions about how to use the items).
- Care plan inclusions preparing clients for self-reliance when services may not be able to reach them for a number of days.

# Further Information / Contact:

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