Environment Town Hall: Gas Plant Expansion

Tuesday, October 17 at 6:00pm · Swansea Town Hall
HEALTH IMPACTS OF GAS PLANTS

Dr Mili Roy
Faculty of Medicine, Univ. of Toronto
Co-chair, CAPE Ontario (Cdn Assn Of Physicians for the Environment)
Co-chair, OCEC (Ontario Climate Emergency Campaign)

Oct 17, 2023
GAS PLANTS BURN METHANE, A POTENT FOSSIL FUEL

FOSSIL FUELS ARE THE LARGEST DRIVER OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

FOSSIL FUELS ARE ESCALATING HUMAN HEALTH HARMs BOTH BY DRIVING CLIMATE CHANGE & BY GENERATING TOXIC AIR POLLUTION
HEALTH IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE
“Climate change is the biggest threat to health in the 21st century and our very survival is at stake”

- Dr Vanessa Kerry, WHO Director-General Special Envoy for Climate Change & Health, 2023

“The climate crisis is a health crisis. We need … increased use of reliable, cheap and green electricity.”

- WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
CLIMATE CHANGE
ITS IMPACT ON HEALTH IN CANADA

Climate change is the biggest global health threat of the 21st century.
— Lancer1


CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON HEALTH IN CANADA

1. Displacement: Climate change exacerbated drought and famine was one factor in Syrian refugee crisis.2
2. Wildfire-related Asthma® & Evacuation
   - Healthcare facilities evacuated.
   - Fort McMurray, 105 patients.3
   - Interior BC, 2017, 660 patients.4
   - Anxiety & PTSD following evacuation.5
3. Flood-related Deaths and Damage
   - 2013 Alberta Flood:6
   - 5 deaths.7
   - Healthcare facilities closed due to flooding.8
4. Droughts9,10
   - Uneven impact on crops.11
   - Socioeconomic stress.12
5. Allergies
   - Increased severity & duration of pollen seasons.13
6. Tick-borne Disease
   - 2017: 3x higher rate Lyme disease in Ontario than 2012-2016 average.14
7. Heat-related Illness15
   - 66 people died in Montreal during 2018 heat wave.16
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14. Heat-related Illness
    - 66 people died in Montreal during 2018 heat wave.
The 2021 BC heat dome was the single deadliest weather event in Canadian history with over 600 deaths.
Housing & food are social determinants of health. The climate crisis is deepening housing and food insecurity.
## CHANGING INFECTIOUS DISEASE PATTERNS IN CANADA

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## Changing Infectious Disease Patterns in Canada

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CLIMATE CHANGE & INFECTIOUS DISEASES

• CPHA warns Ontario may be at risk for malaria, yellow fever, Zika & more in future
• Climate change may aggravate nearly 60% of all human pathogenic diseases
• Planetary heating increases the risk of pandemics
• Climate change is increasing antibiotic resistance
• Depression, addictions, suicide (Cdn study post Ft McMurray fires)

Global Study of 10,000 Youth:
• Climate anxiety affects daily life & functioning ~45%
• Hesitant to have children ~40%
• Governments betray current & future generations ~60%
HEALTH IMPACTS OF AIR POLLUTION
“99% of the world’s population (live) in places where the WHO air quality guidelines levels (are) not met.”

Ref: WHO 2019 stats
Total premature deaths globally due to air pollution: 6.7 million / year

Estimated global health-related costs of air pollution: over US$ 5 trillion (2013)
AIR POLLUTION RELATED DEATHS IN CANADA & ONTARIO

- 15,300 premature Canadian deaths annually (economic impact $114 billion)

- 6,600 premature Ontarian deaths annually (economic impact $49 billion)

Ref: Govt of Canada 2022 (2016 stats)

- Several hundred to several thousand premature Canadian deaths annually due to wildfire smoke
The health harms of air pollution

- Skin ageing
- Stroke
- Brain development
- Mental health
- Dementia
- Lung diseases
- Heart disease
- Asthma
- High blood pressure
- Lung cancer
- Lung development
- Pneumonia
- Heart disease
- Premature birth
- Insulin resistance
- Low birthweight
- and diabetes
- Decreased sperm quality
- Blood clots
- Illness during pregnancy
AIR POLLUTION HARMS PREGNANT WOMEN & BABIES

• Low birth weight
• Premature birth
• Still births
• Birth defects
AIR POLLUTION CAUSES CANCER

• Lung
• Leukemia
• Breast
AIR POLLUTION HARMS MENTAL HEALTH

• Anxiety
• Depression
• Stress
• Suicide
FOSSIL FUEL HEALTH IMPACTS: SOLUTIONS

GET OFF FOSSIL FUELS – GAS PLANTS ARE NOT THE ANSWER!

“IN ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE BY REDUCING EMISSIONS, WE ARE PREVENTING THE WORSENING OF HEALTH CONDITIONS AROUND THE WORLD”

- UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE
“We are running out of time... We are the last generation that has the opportunity to make the changes needed to avoid catastrophic climate change. Climate change must be treated like the public health emergency that it is.”

Our response to climate change can also be “the greatest health opportunity of this century”
“SO WHAT CAN I DO?” - LEVELS OF ADVOCACY

Macro: Systems Change, Policy

Meso: Community, Organizational Level Change

Micro: Self, Family, Friends, Neighbours
ADVOCACY IDEAS

• Education: be aware & educated on the issues

• Sign: Petitions, Action letters, Open letters, others

• Write: Op eds, Letters to Editor, articles, petitions, reports/submissions

• Social Media activism: posts, (re)tweets, blogs

• Have dialogue: active listening & balanced conversations “outside your bubble”
ADVOCACY IDEAS

• Give Talks: pass on your knowledge & passion to amplify

• Civic Engagement: call, email & meet with elected officials

• Participate: Rallies, Marches & demonstrations

• Volunteer/Donate: time/financial support to groups doing good work

• Join a Group: amplify impact by networking & cooperating

• Use your Vote!: prioritize pro-climate policy at election times