

CLIMATE IMPACTS ON VETERANS

Changing Disease Prevalence and Its Effects on Health Equity Within the Veteran Population

Changes in our environmental landscape may **substantially** alter the types of disease people experience (Stone et al., 2023).

For example, more polluted air, higher global temperatures, and more frequent and severe extreme weather events are associated with exacerbated chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) (Stone et al., 2023).

Veterans with **pre-existing conditions** and without the means to relocate or to mitigate the effects of allergens (by weatherizing their homes, buying air purifiers, etc.) could be disproportionately affected and may face worsening health disparities (Stone et al., 2023).

Extreme weather and climate-related events can have lasting mental health consequences for Veterans in affected communities, particularly if they result in degraded livelihoods or community relocation (Prevention, 2020).

The aftermath of Category 5 Hurricane Maria, for example, left many Veterans in Puerto Rico living in **isolation and dealing with reactivated symptoms** of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in response to triggers such as sudden changes in sound and surroundings (Stone et al., 2023).

Changes in our environmental landscape are substantially **shaking** our world (Stone et al., 2023). Changes in our environmental landscape and air pollution already generate more than **\$800 billion in health costs** in the U.S. annually, and that figure is expected to continue rising (Stone et al., 2023).

Action is not just advantageous in an era of changes in our environmental landscape; it's **essential** to effectively serve the Veteran community (Stone et al., 2023).



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*"Never was so much owed by so many to
so few."
— Winston Churchill*