



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 30, 2026

## HEAT EMERGENCIES PREDICTED TO COST THE UNITED STATES MORE THAN \$5 BILLION ANNUALLY, FINDS NEW STUDY

*New modeling shows that a single heat wave could result in the loss of hundreds of lives, widespread disruptions to communities, and nearly \$900 million in costs*

New York, NY — The [Common Health Coalition](#) and the [Milbank Memorial Fund](#) today released [More Illness, Greater Cost: Spotlight Brief on Heat Emergencies](#), which warns of the increasing human and economic costs from heat events. The modeling analysis, conducted by researchers at the [Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health](#), finds that a single significant heat wave in one state could cause **300 deaths, 4,000 heat-related emergency department visits and preventable hospitalizations, and roughly \$870 million in costs**. With an estimated six heat waves occurring each year in large metropolitan areas, these costs total more than **\$5 billion per year nationally**. The potential for cascading impacts from heat emergencies is not inevitable; coordinated action can prevent projected suffering, disruption, and resulting costs.

“Extreme heat already kills more Americans than hurricanes, floods, and tornadoes combined,” said **Dr. Dave A. Chokshi, Chair of the Common Health Coalition**. “Yet even as extreme heat becomes more frequent and severe, we must remember its consequences are not inevitable. Strengthening our health infrastructure is both life-saving and cost-saving. Everyone has a role to play: public health leaders, clinicians and health systems, payers, and employers.”

### **Key Datapoints:**

According to the model, a single heat wave in a state could result in:

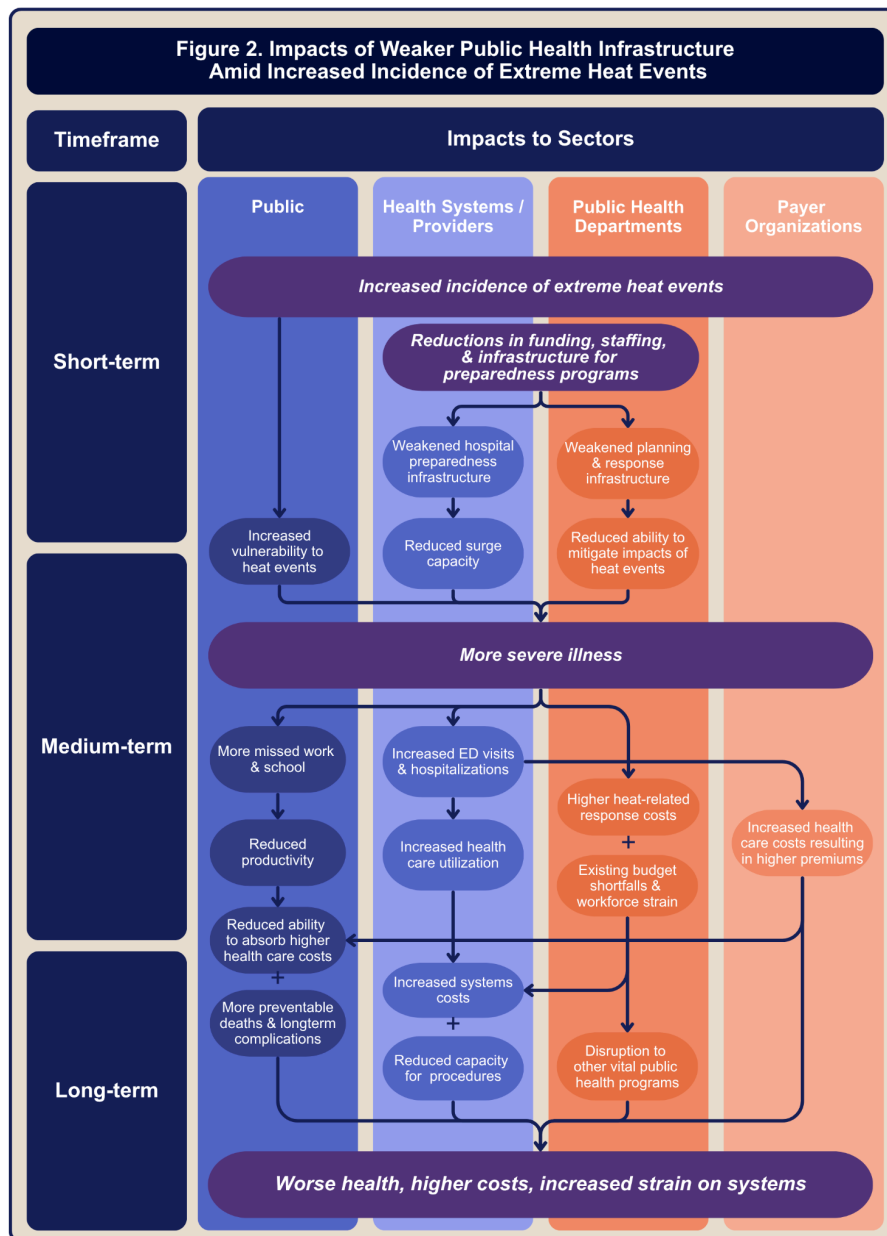
- **300 deaths**
- **4,000 heat-related emergency department visits and preventable hospitalizations**
- **\$870 million** in costs
  - **\$810 million** in disrupted livelihoods, lost wages, and diminished well-being
  - **\$48 million** in medical system costs
  - **\$19 million** in other social costs such as workers compensation

If the state allowed two, large-scale in person events to occur during the heat wave, rather than cancelling them, costs would increase by \$50 million to **\$920 million** in total costs.

“When heat emergencies strike, communities need public health and health care systems that can work together effectively to save lives,” said **Dr. Debra Lubar, President of the Milbank Memorial Fund**. “Rather than learning to collaborate during a crisis – public health and health care need to join forces now to prepare for heat emergencies. Harm from summer heat waves can be minimized, and the preparation for a heat emergency will improve communities’ readiness to face any public health threat.”

**Actions to Mitigate Potential Impacts:** As outlined in the brief, these impacts are not inevitable. Reducing adverse health outcomes by 10-30% could save a state more than \$200 million in overall costs. Public health leaders, clinicians and health systems, employers, and payers can take action to strengthen public health preparedness infrastructure, reduce preventable deaths and illness, and prevent billions in avoidable economic costs. For example:

- **Public health leaders** can develop interoperable early warning systems that link climate, clinical, and public health data support timely heat alerts and rapid community response.
- **Clinicians and health systems** can co-develop written, individualized action plans with every high-risk patient, covering cooling refuges, medication storage, power-outage contingencies, and a check-in contact.
- **Employers** can assess workforce heat vulnerability and strengthen heat protection for both outdoor and indoor workers in non-climate-controlled environments such as warehouses, kitchens, and transportation facilities.



to

- **Payers** can explore coverage to expand heat-mitigation support for highest-risk members, including air conditioners, backup power for medical equipment, and home energy assistance.

The brief builds on the Coalition’s [previous reports](#) analyzing the consequences of public health cuts for the health care system. The Coalition and Milbank Memorial Fund will be hosting a webinar on the report, featuring subject matter experts, on **Thursday, July 9, at 2:00 PM ET**. [Register here](#).

### About The Common Health Coalition

The Common Health Coalition is the nation’s largest multi-sector health collaborative – a first-of-its-kind initiative spanning clinician groups, health departments, hospitals, payers, and community organizations. By uniting leaders who rarely share the same table, we turn alignment into action at a scale no single sector can reach

alone. Our common goal is to improve the health of people and communities across the nation. We do this by strengthening partnership and dissolving siloes between the health care and public health systems. The Coalition is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization.

Founded in 2023 by the Alliance of Community Health Plans, AHIP, American Hospital Association, American Medical Association, and Kaiser Permanente, the Coalition now represents more than 350 members across 45 states and territories. Learn more by visiting [commonhealthcoalition.org](https://commonhealthcoalition.org) and follow on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#).

### **About Milbank Memorial Fund**

Milbank Memorial Fund is an endowed operating foundation that works to improve population health and equity equity by connecting leaders with experience and sound evidence. The Fund supports state and local health policy leaders in achieving better health for all through small convenings, cross-state networks, and annual leadership programs. The Fund also publishes evidence-based policy reports and *The Milbank Quarterly*, an editorially independent peer-reviewed journal of population health and health policy. Our policy focus areas include primary care transformation and health care affordability. Learn more at [milbank.org](https://milbank.org) and by following us on [LinkedIn](#) and [BlueSky](#).

###

### **Media Contacts:**

Michael Lanza  
michael@commonhealthcoalition.org

Christine Haran  
charan@milbank.org