

Children's Health /Climate Change Podcasts

First in A Series of Three Podcasts to air during October 2015, focusing on the impacts of Climate Change on Children's Health

Guest: Dr. Laura Anderko, Director of the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment

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PODCAST #1 - -General Overview – Climate Change

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**TAKE AWAY MESSAGE:** Climate Change is a matter of Health. Taking action to reduce carbon pollution creates immediate “win-win” situations for our health and the environment.

### Script

*(Opening music)*

**HOST:** Hello: I'm Prentiss Ward, EPA's Children's Health Coordinator in the Mid-Atlantic Region, and welcome to Environment Matters. October is Children's Health Month, and this year's theme is “Protecting Children's Health in a Changing Climate.” Our guest today, Dr. Laura Anderko, (pronounced - AN- DER- KOO ?) is the Director of the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment. Dr. Anderko has served on numerous advisory committees and boards focused on public health and the environment. In 2013, she was named a White House Champion of Change for her leadership in raising awareness about climate-related health effects. Welcome Dr. Anderko.

**2:51 – 2:54**      *Dr. Anderko:* Thank you, I'm happy to be here.

**HOST:** Most of us are familiar with the term “climate change,” but can you tell us how is the climate is actually changing?

**3:00 – 4:10**

*Dr. Anderko:* Well, when we talk about Climate Change, we're really looking at trends over time and so weather is what we actually experience every day – climate is that accumulation over long periods of time, and so in the DC area for example, we expect September to be cool, but most of September has been in the 90s, which is not typical and then we make that determination based on climate trends. Increased greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are changing our climate. Some of these changes include increased temperature; increased precipitation; sea level rise; changing seasonal patterns, which means growing season - so our springs are coming earlier, our falls are lasting longer and so we have a longer growing season in most areas, and also more extreme weather events such as hurricanes.

**HOST:** Are there any recent examples of climate change that our listeners can relate to?

**19:48-20:04**

*Dr. Anderko:* One example of how climate is changing are the consistent trends that we're seeing in extreme heat events and hot days, and so for example – last year in 2014, it was the warmest year on record and so we are consistently looking at our weather reports and finding extreme changes that are breaking records.

**HOST:** And how do these changes impact children in particular, Doctor?

**4:17 – 4:26**

*Dr. Anderko:* Climate change impacts all of us, but has a unique effect on children whose interaction with the environment is very different from adults.

**HOST:** Why is that? Why are children more vulnerable?

**4:30 – 4:52**

*Dr. Anderko:* For one thing, children's body systems are still developing, they breathe, eat and drink more for their size compared to adults. They spend more time outdoors, all of which may increase their exposure to harmful pollutants such as ozone. Infants and young children are particularly vulnerable to heat waves, for example, because of their immature regulatory systems.

**HOST:** How has this impacted your work at the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and Environment?

**13:02 – 13:34**

*Dr. Anderko:* The Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and Environment is particularly concerned about how climate change impacts kids. We are in the process – for example – of working with the DC Department of Health to look at

heat events, pollen increases and hospitalizations related to asthma for children and we're finding significant increases as climate change continues.

**HOST:** What you are doing at the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and Environment – or MACCHE as it is more commonly known - is impressive, but what can our listeners do to make a difference?

**14:32 – 15:02**

*Dr. Anderko:* Individuals can look for ways to reduce emissions at home, work, school, and in the community. Some simple solutions include: driving less or driving hybrid electric cars; turning off computers and lights when not in use; using Energy Star light bulbs and appliances; and using a properly programmable thermostat. These are just a few ways to use less energy and reduce your carbon footprint.

**15:02 – 15:49**

*Dr. Anderko:* The Clean Power Plan is another important way for states to reduce carbon pollution. People need to get familiar with their states' strategy and plans for reducing carbon pollution. It is incredibly important to support alternative and renewable energy that will reduce carbon pollution – because this does impact – carbon does impact climate change. Also keeping in mind that climate change is a matter of health, we need to take action to reduce carbon pollution – which will create immediate win-win solutions for not only our environment but for our health.

**HOST:** Dr. Anderko, thank you for being here today and for this discussion on a very important topic. Because this is such an important topic, Dr. Anderko has agreed to join us for two additional podcasts; so to our listeners, please join us for parts II and III. In the meantime, for additional information, please visit the EPA climate change and Children's Health websites at EPA.gov.

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