A MULTI-FACETED APPROACH TO EDUCATING PHYSICIANS ABOUT THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THEIR PATIENTS’ HEALTH

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INTRODUCTION | BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

- Climate change is impacting our patients’ health through:
  - Increased heatwaves, wildfires, vector-borne illnesses and worsening air quality
  - Amplification of existing health disparities in vulnerable communities
- Clinicians have a powerful megaphone - and a profound responsibility - to effectively communicate the relationship between climate change & health to their patients
- Most clinicians are “concerned” about climate change
  - BUT only a few have knowledge and skills about climate changes specific impacts on health and how to discuss the implications with their patients

AIM | PURPOSE | OBJECTIVES

- To design, implement and evaluate a multi-faceted approach to educate physicians about the impacts on climate change on their patients’ health across the continuum of medical education

PROJECT ALIGNMENT | ADVANCE ORGANIZATION PRIORITIES

- Leading Environmental sustainability is 1 of only 6 system enterprise-wide pledges
- Climate education aligns with each of the other 5 pledges:
  - Advancing Health Equity; 2) Building the next generation workforce; 3) Improving affordability;
  - Accelerating learning and discovery; 5) Elevating clinical preeminence

METHODS: INTERVENTIONS

PRIMARY AUDIENCE

- Physicians & teaching faculty across the continuum of medical education: UME-GME-CME

INTERVENTIONS

- Climate +1: Add 1 slide, add a climate question, a case, and/or an article to an existing education topic/session highlighting impact of climate change (eg, heat, air quality, water quality) + eval QR
  - Use library +1 request form → 2-3 key articles linking climate to your topic
  - Engage learners in creating climate related resources (eg, list of area cooling stations)
  - Co-Sponsor Climate related continuing education sessions
  - Create a SharePoint “hub” as climate related resources, upcoming events, slide templates

IRB

- Activities of this nature have been determined to be exempt (aka not human subjects research)

RESULTS: PRELIMINARY

- Climate +1: Oriented > 200 to the +1 “ask” including the library’s request form, evaluation QR codes
- Engaging Learners:
  - Major emphasis in new Internal Medicine Primary Care Track
  - 2 resources created to date (eg, cooling sites); 1 resident focus on climate change
- CME – Across the Enterprise
  - Co-sponsoring 3 accredited CE sessions in 2024
  - Inclusion of Climate +1 in multi-state MedTalks beginning March 2024
- SharePoint Site: Went live February 2024 with Atrium Health GME / NI-IX partners

BARRIERS – STRATEGIES

- BARRIER #1: Faculty discomfort with unfamiliar topic and lack of time for in-depth learning
  - STRATEGY: Individual outreach to faculty by co-author assist with key points
- BARRIER #2: Lack of centralized hub for climate medical education(QR eval codes) and time
  - STRATEGY: Create and launch a SharePoint site | Include budget for med educ in AH Task Force Charge

DISCUSSION

CRITICAL NEXT STEPS

- Sustain volunteer team’s energy for outreach, response to queries, agility to incorporate new partners
- Monitor/evaluation data: Climate #1 implementations, usages of lib request, session evals, attendance

AREAS SEEKING GUIDANCE

- Strategies to track transfer of education to clinical practice (eg, climate discussed with patients)
- Curating the mass of research & activities locally, nationally and internationally re: climate and health

REFERENCES