



January 17, 2023

Victor Dzau, MD
National Academies of Medicine
Action Collaborative on Decarbonizing the U.S. Health Sector (Climate Collaborative)
500 Fifth St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Dr. Dzau,

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) is requesting to join the NAM Action Collaborative on Decarbonizing the U.S. Health Sector.

NACHC is a 501(c)3 organization that was founded in 1971 to “promote efficient, high quality, comprehensive health care that is accessible, culturally and linguistically competent, community directed, and patient centered for all.” NACHC aspires to be a Network Organization within the Climate Collaborative because of the opportunity to learn, share, and join in collective action to mitigate and prepare the healthcare sector for climate change. NACHC is the voice for federally qualified health centers, non-federally funded look-alike clinics, health center controlled networks, and primary care associations across the United States. Community health centers are the primary health care home for over 30 million patients serving all regardless of ability to pay. Their services span across 14,000 sites located in both rural and urban areas. By federal statute, health centers must be located in medically underserved areas and serve medically underserved populations. Such locations are often in historically redlined communities, which face greater risk for flooding, urban heat island effects, and exposure to toxic chemicals.

NACHC is committed to mitigating and building resilience for climate change because community health center populations will be hit first and worst by these issues. We currently oversee several initiatives and collaborations that align with three Climate Collaborative priority areas, including Health Care Delivery, Health Professional Education, and Policy, Finance and Metrics. To improve sustainable health care delivery, we are engaging with Direct Relief, Capital Link, and Collective Energy to design and install solar microgrid systems at health centers. Within this initiative, we are also identifying financing and payment structures so that health centers will be able to take full advantage of the Inflation Reduction Act tax credits when turning towards renewable energy options. Additionally, we are working to bolster health professional education and communication through three major initiatives: 1) A Patient Centered Climate Resilience Learning Collaborative to protect vulnerable populations from extreme weather events in partnership with Harvard T.H. Chan Center for Climate, Health and the Global Environment, the Arshat Rockefeller Foundation, and Migrant Clinicians Network; and 2) Partnering with ecoAmerica to tailor the Climate for Health Ambassador program for health center audiences to raise awareness about climate change and inspire actions, including reducing

greenhouse gas footprints; and 3) Creating an interest group of community health centers, primary care association representatives, and Bureau of Primary Health Care technical assistance partners to share resources and best practices to address environmental health and climate change challenges.

We are excited about the opportunity to join the Climate Collaborative. We know that community health centers reach marginalized populations, like people of color and those with limited income, who are disproportionately impacted by climate change. We believe that we can both provide insight about programs and initiatives that have been successful, while disseminating new information from the Climate Collaborative to our members. Please let us know if we can provide any further information about our efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RAGH', written in a cursive style.

Rachel A. Gonzales-Hanson
Interim President and CEO
National Association of Community Health Centers