

# Key Actions for Health Professionals to Advance Sustainable Health Care

## I. Individual Actions / Stewardship Opportunities

1. **Optimize Medication Choices:** Prescribe medications with a sustainability lens – considering different medication types, administration methods, prescribing quantities, deprescribing, patient needs, and optimizing the number of refills to reduce waste emissions. When appropriate, consider non-pharmaceutical treatments.
2. **Engage with Telehealth:** Use telehealth for patient visits, when appropriate, to reduce patient and staff travel, emissions, and resources.
3. **Optimize Diagnostic Testing:** Consult evidence-based practice recommendations to reduce low-value testing and treatments.
4. **Reduce Waste:** Implement practices that reduce waste and emissions and conserve resources while maintaining quality and patient safety.
5. **Assess Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Use:** Minimize overuse and inappropriate use of PPE while prioritizing staff and patient safety.

## II. Health System-Level Actions

1. **Support Institutional Programs:** Participate in institutional initiatives to reduce waste and emissions.
2. **Promote Sustainable Procurement:** Identify and encourage procurement from vendors who prioritize sustainability efforts.
3. **Educate on Climate, Health, and Health Care:** Leverage the trust people have in health professionals to educate peers, trainees, and patients on the health impacts of climate change, how climate and health care intersect, and what opportunities exist to reduce the climate impact of health care delivery.
4. **Integrate Climate Resilience into Care:** Incorporate climate resilience into care plans of patients at higher risk by considering how climate hazards, such as extreme heat, can impact their health conditions and ensure they are prepared for disruptions in care. Encourage organizational leaders to develop and release a climate resilience plan for continuous operations, anticipating and incorporating the expressed needs of groups in the community that experience disproportionate risk of climate-related harm.

See the full National Academy of Medicine resource: [nam.edu/ClimateCollaborative](https://nam.edu/ClimateCollaborative)

