

# Reducing the Health System's Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Key Messages to Catalyze Climate Action

## *Messaging Video Companion Guide*

### Sample messages

State Medicaid programs are well positioned to play a leading role in fostering the reduction of harmful greenhouse gas emissions. Now is the time to ensure key players and partners understand the opportunity Medicaid has to become a pioneer and pave the way for a more sustainable and resilient health system. The sample messaging shared in this document is organized into several themes to appeal to different areas of interest among different audiences. **This document can be used as a companion piece to a related messaging video, which can be accessed [here](#).**

### Lowering harmful emissions in the health system

#### "Do no harm" conflict

Climate change poses a growing threat to public health in the United States, increasing health care use and costs while diminishing the sustainability of our health system. But that same health system is itself a top producer of the harmful greenhouse gases that drive climate change. This means our current health system is in direct conflict with our guiding principle to do no harm.

#### Shared benefits

Investing money to proactively curb harmful greenhouse gas emissions from the health system can help us realize co-benefits for adjacent economic sectors and related policy issues, such as equity. Reducing emissions addresses social determinants of health, enhances health equity, and supports improved health outcomes, which can cut down on excess health care usage and costs. Money saved through sustainability measures can be strategically reinvested across multiple Medicaid priority areas. Many of the emission reduction strategies can generate economic benefit for adjacent sectors and local employment overall.

### Why Medicaid?

#### Strong position

Medicaid has a long tradition of innovative and resourceful leadership in the face of emerging health threats. Our state-federal partnership structure lets us remain flexible and experiment to meet the specific needs of our state in a way that other agencies cannot. We can leverage our significant purchasing power, regulatory capacity, and other creative strategies, partnerships, and policy pathways to incentivize reduced emissions in the health system.

#### Health equity

Climate change disproportionately affects the communities Medicaid is designed to serve. Efforts to reduce the health system's harmful greenhouse gas emissions can help enhance health equity and address

social determinants of health, which are top Medicaid priorities. We can now integrate our responsibility to safeguard health equity with growing efforts to reduce our health system's environmental impact.

## Progress is possible

### In this together

Medicaid has a well-established history of collaborating within and across agencies to drive solutions in the face of emerging health threats. By working with and learning from the bold and innovative actions of others, we can again take the helm to safeguard the health of all we serve amid our changing climate. Together, we can pave the way for a more sustainable, equitable, and resilient health system.

### Opportunities abound

We can now tap into the emerging landscape of national and state legislation, policies, programs, and federal and philanthropic funding focused on efforts to reduce harmful emissions. Applying a climate lens to our work can help us better assess climate change-driven health risks and integrate them into our policies and provider engagement. New solutions we pursue might even bring about additional benefits to other sectors or policy priorities in our state.

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