



Called to Care So That **Everyone Has a Healthier Planet to Live On**

Called to Care supports collaborative, community-led efforts across California to reduce carbon emissions, build resilient communities and support healthy people living on a healthy planet.

Climate change—driven by a 40% increase in carbon dioxide in the air since 1700—is now having a measurable impact on our state and every Californian. The entire state is heating up, with Southern California warming by about three degrees Fahrenheit in the last century. The changing climate is expected to further decrease our state's water supply, increase wildfire risk and disrupt ecosystems, as well as exacerbate other social determinants of poor health, e.g., food and housing insecurity, lack of safe spaces.

The impact of climate change on human health is on the rise as well. High temperatures can cause dehydration and heat stroke and contribute to cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses. Children, the elderly, people with chronic illnesses, outdoor workers and low-income communities are especially at risk. Called to Care supports efforts to understand and address the disproportionate impact of climate change and environmental conditions on communities of color, Indigenous tribes and rural communities. Climate change is not only a public health crisis but, at its core, also a health equity issue.

How Health Systems Are Leading the Way

Every sector—including health care—must address the challenges of climate change. Recognizing that the health care sector contributes 8.5% of total greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S., Called to Care seeks to build awareness about California's safety net health providers' commitment to reducing their own carbon footprint while advancing climate-smart health care and partnering with others to build climate-resilient communities.

Providence and Dignity Health—the state's largest Catholic health systems—are both strong supporters of the Paris Climate Agreement, the global treaty to limit global warming, and of U.S. efforts to meet its climate targets under the accord. Providence has pledged to be carbon negative by 2030 and Dignity Health to be net zero by 2040. Both systems have been at the forefront of inspiring others in the health care sector to reduce their carbon emissions while advocating for meaningful climate, energy and equity policies at the state and federal levels.

In many communities across California, these providers are at the center of tackling the biggest health and social challenges, including the impacts of climate change and environmental quality. These institutions are uniquely positioned to serve as a hub for coordinating access to health and social services to communities especially impacted by the effects of climate change, including extreme heat and hazardous air quality. Often these Catholic care sites have already served and effectively partnered in the community for generations. They are supporting a healthier planet and healthier people by taking key steps, including:

- **Mitigating Climate Impacts.** Reducing health care's own carbon footprint; promoting environmental sustainability programming in health care; and purchasing, sourcing or contracting with vendors that prioritize environmental protections.
- **Building Resilience.** Educating staff and the public about the interconnectedness of climate and health; preparing for climate impacts and helping to build community health.
- **Promoting Leadership and Community Engagement.** Participating in meaningful partnerships that build common ground to protect our common home; supporting communities in a just transition to a low-carbon, sustainable future.



Called to Care So That

Everyone Has a Healthier Planet to Live On

Environmental Programs Making a Difference

California's Catholic health providers are bringing energy, leadership and resources to reduce their carbon footprint and promote environmental sustainability. Broad system-wide operational changes—such as minimizing waste, transitioning transportation fleets to hybrid or all-electric vehicles and installing water-saving sinks—are critical, but focused local actions make a difference as well, such as:

Energy Efficiency and Waste Reduction at Dignity Health Central Coast Hospitals—The Marian Regional Medical Center generates and uses renewable energy from two onsite cogeneration plants. French Hospital Medical Center annually diverts tons of plastic from landfills by reprocessing medical devices.

Food Waste Reduction at Providence Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital—This hospital reduces food waste and helps vulnerable members of the community by partnering with Sonoma Food Runners to donate excess food to neighborhood food banks and local shelters. In addition to hosting multiple community gardens, Providence has reduced thousands of pounds of food waste in more efficient food preparation. Many sites are composting food waste, keeping it out of landfills and reducing methane formation, a potent greenhouse gas.

At Dignity Health, we understand that the well-being of society is dependent on the health of our planet. It is therefore imperative to enact sustainability measures throughout our system, as our actions can either harm or benefit the safety and well-being of the patients in our care.

Sister Mary Ellen Leciejewski, O.P.

Vice President of Corporate Responsibility, Dignity Health

At Providence, we recognize our responsibility to act now and challenge others in our industry and beyond to do the same. We can only change the course of this crisis through collective action. Our vision of health for a better world calls us to care for the most vulnerable and our precious resources through environmental justice and stewardship. Core to Providence's plan is the dramatic reduction of our carbon footprint. Our goal: Providence will be carbon negative by 2030.

Ali Santore

Executive Vice President, Chief Advocacy and Social Responsibility Officer, Providence

About Called to Care

Called to Care aims to improve the health of every person in our state by supporting strong connections between safety net providers—including hospitals, clinics and health care professionals—and community organizations to address California's most pressing health and social challenges.

Called to Care is a project of the Alliance of Catholic Health Care, together with members Dignity Health and Providence.



Connect With Us.

Connect with Called to Care to help build stronger ties between health care providers and community organizations to address California's most pressing social challenges.
calledtocareforall.org/register