

# TALKING GUIDE

## ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE



This document provides a summary of the latest research around climate change, and offers tools for how IMANA's staff, board, and network can discuss these issues with friends, family, colleagues, and patients.

*Discussing global warming with friends and family leads people to learn influential facts, such as the scientific consensus that human-caused global warming is happening. Stronger perceptions of scientific agreement increase beliefs that climate change is happening and human-caused, as well as worry about climate change.*

### WHY?

In late 2019, IMANA launched its new climate initiative, focusing on climate health education, advocacy, and operational sustainability. Given the urgency of the climate crisis, and its direct impact on global public health, the IMANA Board decided for the first time in the organization's 50+ year history to create an advocacy campaign.

### WHY IMANA?

- Effective public communications and advocacy have played central roles in decreasing other public health problems such as tobacco use, HIV/AIDS, and auto injuries.
- The public health community holds the potential to influence diverse audiences, from the general public to the business community and government officials.
- There are co-benefits to societal action on climate change: cleaner air & water, improved mental health & social capital, & fewer motor-vehicle-related injuries.



### BELIEFS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

- 59% of Americans are “alarmed” or “concerned” about global warming
- Most Americans are worried about harm from extreme weather in their locale, including extreme heat (69%), droughts (64%), flooding (60%), and/or water shortages (59%)
- In 2019, 58% of Americans said global warming is a “health” issue

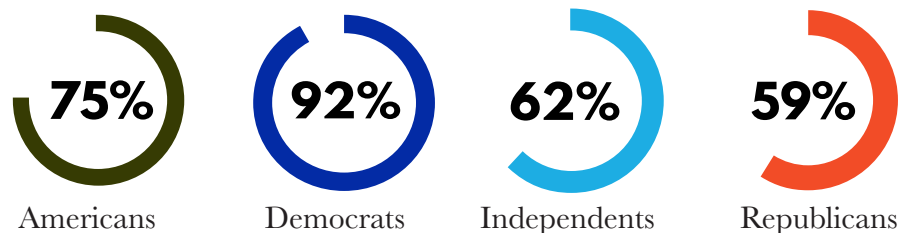
### WHO'S HAVING CLIMATE CONVERSATIONS?

- 63% of Americans say that they “rarely” or “never” discuss global warming with family and friends
- Americans say that their primary care physician is their most trusted source of information on global warming

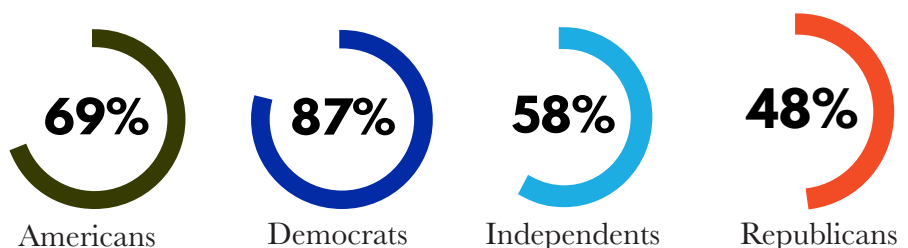
### POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Although 59% of self-identified conservative Republicans do not believe global warming is real, 73% of Americans overall feel otherwise, and are supportive of broad climate policy changes.

#### *Support regulating carbon dioxide as a pollutant*



#### *Support a Revenue-Neutral Carbon Tax*



## EFFECTIVE MESSAGING

*When talking about climate change ...*

**USE** 

**Carbon Pollution** ..... **Carbon Emissions**  
Suggests dirt, illness, and threats to health

**Dirty Fuel Sources** ..... **Oil and Gas/Fossil Fuels**  
Clearly demonstrates harm

**Clean Energy** ..... **Renewable Energy**  
Implies health, life, and vitality

**Climate Preparation** ..... **Climate Adaptation**  
Assumes we can do something

**Climate Change** ..... **Global Warming**  
Describes the long-term effects on the earth's climate.  
Both conservatives and progressives respond well to this term.

**DROP** 





## CLIMATE CHANGE OR CLIMATE CRISIS?

When speaking with elected officials and other policymakers, medical professionals are encouraged to use the term “climate crisis,” because it accurately captures the severity and urgency of the situation, and government officials have tools for taking action. However, using “climate crisis” may lead individual members of the public to feel overwhelmed, helpless, and unmotivated to act. Thus, “climate change” is the best general term to use in most other settings.

## TYPICAL CLIMATE-RELATED MEDICAL OUTCOMES, AS REPORTED BY PHYSICIANS

- “I have a patient who has environmental allergies that are usually treated with antihistamines. They now have to use steroid inhalers and bronchodilators at times.”
- “My patient experienced atrocities during Hurricane Katrina. As a result, she had PTSD and severe depression that prevented her from holding a stable job.”

## USING CLIMATE LANGUAGE WITH PATIENTS

-  “During this season, use your inhaler frequently for your asthma.”
-  “With climate change increasing the number of poor air quality days, make sure that your inhaler is with you at all times.”
-  “Drink plenty of water this summer to avoid dehydration.”
-  “We’re now seeing more dangerously hot days due to climate change, so drink plenty of water, and make sure that your children and older parents stay out of the heat.”

## AUDIENCES

- Family
- Friends
- Colleagues
- Patients
- Elected Officials
- Corporations

## WHEN TALKING WITH PEOPLE, REMEMBER

- 01) Tell stories about people
- 02) Speak using your own values
- 03) Use common language and ground it in tangible things and real human experience
- 04) Emphasize solutions
- 05) Focus on personal benefit
- 06) End with an ask

## MOTIVATIONS



### *Secret Sauce*

Having both “constructive hope” (e.g. rising collective awareness, seeing others act, more clean energy) AND “constructive doubt” (action is not occurring at the necessary scale and pace) leads to increased climate policy support and political engagement

### *Top Motivation for Americans on Climate*

Securing a safe future for our children and grandchildren

### *What’s Driving Climate Action for People of Faith, including Muslims?*

- 1) “to provide a better life for our children and grandchildren”
- 2) “to protect God’s creation”

*Data and messaging sourced from the [Yale Program on Climate Change Communication](#) and [George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication](#).*