

CASE STUDY

Protecting At-Risk Populations from the Dangers of Climate-Related Events

Learn how Acentra Health Enabled Oregon to Save Lives with a Rapid, Scalable Approach to Climate-Related Events

A barrage of climate-related emergencies has continuously put Oregon’s most vulnerable residents at risk. To tackle this challenge, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) turned to Acentra Health. Together, they crafted a dynamic strategy that addressed immediate health-related social needs (HRSN) and fortified the state’s emergency response systems. This partnership has measurably improved health outcomes—while building resilience in communities most impacted by climate change.

THE CHALLENGE

Due to climate change, Oregon’s climate has become increasingly unpredictable. Rising temperatures and shifting precipitation patterns have led to more frequent and intense weather events resulting in an uptick in wildfires, heatwaves, and ice storms—events that disproportionately endanger the elderly, children, and those with chronic health conditions. Not only do these events devastate landscapes but also severely impact air quality. This deterioration in air quality poses serious health risks, particularly for vulnerable populations, especially those living with asthma, who face dangerous conditions due to increased airborne pollutants. The unpredictable nature of these climate shifts complicates efforts to manage resources and plan for future challenges, making it harder for communities to adapt and thrive.

Recognizing the urgent climate crisis, OHA committed to ensuring that at-risk populations received life-saving services and resources. To address this challenge, OHA sought statewide partners capable of delivering rapid, scalable responses to protect public health during emergencies. By collaborating with the Public Health Division, OHA engaged community partners across the state who provided essential support, such as food and climate devices, during the COVID pandemic. These partners identified individuals in need of climate support and worked with Acentra Health to screen them for eligibility. They also assisted directly with device installation and utility support. Additionally, the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) and the Office of Resiliency and Emergency Management (OREM) provided warehousing and delivery of climate devices during crises, ensuring a reliable supply when online and store inventories were often depleted. This unified front allowed OHA to respond swiftly with a dependable supply of devices. OHA applied a Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) approach with an environmental equity lens, ensuring the right solutions were provided at the right time and right place for their members.



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THE SOLUTION

To address these challenges, OHA partnered with Acentra Health, an industry leader with extensive expertise in the public sector healthcare delivery system and issued a call for support from other state agencies, including ODHS, community partners, and Coordinated Care Organizations. Following a thorough analysis, OHA and Acentra Health led the implementation of several key strategies:

TARGETED OUTREACH

Using Geo Heat Mapping technology, Acentra Health identified high-risk members during emergencies, ensuring timely outreach through text and telephone communications.

RAPID RESPONSE ASSESSMENTS

Acentra Health trained care coordinators and case managers who swiftly conducted assessments to determine immediate needs, including health risks and social determinants of health.

CARE COORDINATION

Acentra Health fostered care and communication between patients, caregivers, and providers, ensuring timely and seamless support.

CRITICAL RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION

To address unsafe heat conditions and air cleanliness issues, OHA and their community partners were able to distribute climate devices such as air conditioners and air filters to help at-risk members cope with extreme weather conditions.

DATA-DRIVEN INSIGHTS

Through sophisticated, real-time data analytics, Acentra Health provided actionable insights to improve care coordination, optimize resource allocation, and enhance overall climate-related emergency preparedness.

STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

OHA partnered with OREM, ODHS, and community stakeholders, utilizing resources like the ODHS Emergency Response Management system and warehouse facilities to effectively support a larger member base.

ADVANCED HEALTH EQUITY

OHA demonstrated a strong commitment to health equity by providing fair and unbiased resource allocation, ensuring all members were treated with respect and dignity. Through real-time data sharing with Acentra Health and strategic partnerships, OHA led the way in delivering equitable care to their members.

THE OUTCOMES

Between July 2020 and September 2023, our strategic partnership led to **substantial improvements** in Oregon's emergency response and health outcomes:

Nearly

40%

of the 9,262 members contacted, actively participated in preparedness assessments.

Nearly

90%

of members received crucial emergency education via mobile alerts, ensuring they were ready to act during climate events.

Over

15,000

climate devices have been delivered to Oregonians, helping them stay healthy and safe during severe heatwaves and poor air quality.

Oregon's multi-phase HRSN demonstration, is **the first in the nation to introduce Medicaid funding for interventions that address social needs** related to housing, nutrition, and climate change to improve health outcomes and lower program costs.



THE REAL-WORLD IMPACT

In the summer of 2021, during an unprecedented heatwave, Acentra Health's rapid action had a profound impact. A young girl with severe cardiac issues and asthma was able to remain safely at home thanks to the swift delivery and installation of an air conditioner, dramatically improving her quality of life. In another instance, a foster child with Type 1 Diabetes and ADHD received vital support through the provision of cooling and air filtration devices, ensuring her health needs were met despite the extreme heat. These stories are just a glimpse of how Acentra Health's interventions have saved lives and provided peace of mind to Oregonian families.

A NEW STANDARD

Oregon is Now Setting a New Standard for Emergency Response: Safeguarding Health Amid Climate Crises

Acentra Health's partnership with OHA in managing health-related social needs during Oregon's climate emergencies has set a new standard for what is possible in emergency response. By combining cutting-edge technology, strategic foresight, and a commitment to health equity, Acentra Health has not only protected vulnerable populations but also strengthened the state's overall resilience to future crises. This partnership is a powerful example of how proactive, data-driven strategies can lead to transformative outcomes, ensuring that even in the face of climate adversity, the health and well-being of the community are safeguarded.

The people you serve depend on the outcomes we deliver together.

ABOUT ACENTRA HEALTH

With 30+ years of experience, Acentra Health, combines public sector knowledge, clinical expertise, and technological ingenuity to modernize the health-care experience for state and federal partners and their priority populations. From designing and developing advanced claims, encounter, and provider solutions that drive efficiency and cost savings to delivering clinically focused service models for care management and quality oversight, Acentra Health is accelerating better outcomes. Acentra Health is backed by Carlyle (NASDAQ: CG), a global investment firm.

Contact Us: If you have questions or would like more information on how Acentra Health's solutions and services can benefit your organization, please visit [Acentra.com](https://www.acentra.com).