

# Addressing Climate Health, Healthy Built Environments and Health Equity through Advocacy:

## SIMCOE MUSKOKA DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT POSITION STATEMENTS

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### **Integrate Determinants of Health within a Climate Health Lens:**

SMDHU supports the implementation of strategies that improve health equity and increase individual and community resilience to climate health impacts by addressing the range of structural determinants of health (e.g., social, economic, environmental, commercial). This requires centering health, built environment and health equity considerations into climate action.

2

### **Integrate a Climate Health Lens into Agency Activities and Operations:**

SMDHU supports the application of a climate health lens to integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation into all SMDHU activities and operations. SMDHU is committed to demonstrating leadership and building public health capacity for climate health work.

3

### **Promote Healthy, Resilient and Sustainable Communities:**

SMDHU supports approaches that advance community well-being by creating healthy, active, resilient, and sustainable communities. These communities provide physical, social-cultural, and economic environments that enable everyone to live to their full potential. Healthy communities can effectively respond to and rapidly recover from current/emerging health threats including climate-related hazards.

4

### **Promote Energy Landscape Transformation:**

SMDHU supports approaches that promote decarbonization and facilitate a rapid and equitable transition away from fossil fuels to low-carbon, clean, renewable energy sources to ensure a safe, affordable, resilient, reliable, and sustainable future for all. We aim to normalize green energy and facilitate transformative climate mitigation.

Climate change, the built environment and health equity\* have complex interactions that influence our health and well-being. To protect and improve health, public health, municipalities, community partners and members must work together through actions that address climate change (both mitigation and adaptation), strengthen healthy community design, and promote health equity. Together we can create communities that are healthy, resilient and sustainable.

These position statements, approved by the Board of Health in February 2024, guide the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's advocacy efforts and actions related to climate health, the built environment and healthy equity. They also promote collaborative action amongst different sectors to address these interconnected health risks and to support overall health and well-being.

\*Health equity is when all people can access and act on opportunities to reach their full health potential and are not limited from doing so because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, social class, income level or other social or economic circumstances.

