CLIMATE COMMUNICATION CONSORTIUM OF MARYLAND

Public Health, Energy & Climate Change, 2014

Communication Considerations

- **Put doctors and public health experts out front and center before Marylanders to talk about climate and health.**
  Medical professionals are among the top five professions trusted the most for information on climate change. Marylanders trust doctors and public health experts only slightly less strongly than scientists at Maryland universities on the issue. Make sure that Marylanders see physicians and health experts taking a stance on climate's health risks, and what they can do to address them.

- **Marylanders think that climate change will affect their children's future health; remind them that it also affects their current health and that children are particularly at risk.**
  State residents are less likely to identify young children as very vulnerable to climate change, and think that the people who are most likely to be harmed are future generations. Bring the conversation back to the present by emphasizing that people today are harmed by climate change's impacts and that young children are among the most vulnerable, along with those on low incomes, people with medical conditions and the elderly.

- **Help Marylanders make the connection between climate change and increases in disease**
  Infectious disease is less likely to be cited as becoming more common with climate change across all regions of the state even though climate change is projected to affect the distribution of disease vectors. Talk to Marylanders about what they can do to protect themselves from increased risk.

- **Talk about connection between fossil fuels, like coal, and air pollution**
  Marylanders were more likely in 2014 than in 2013 to say that they saw coal as very harmful to people's health. Substantial proportions of Marylanders still say they do not know what risks energy sources pose to their health, however. This provides an opportunity to discuss the connection between forms of energy production and health.

- **Make it clear that there are energy options that benefit public health**
  Renewable energy sources such as wind and solar continue to be viewed as non-harmful to health. In 2014, there was an increase of five percentage points—up to 65% from 60% the previous year— in those people who say that solar has no negative effects on health. Help Marylanders make the switch to renewables through their electricity suppliers, or link them to firms that will help them generate their own renewable energy, such as with solar leasing programs.

  http://www.climatemaryland.org/public-health-energy-climate-change-2