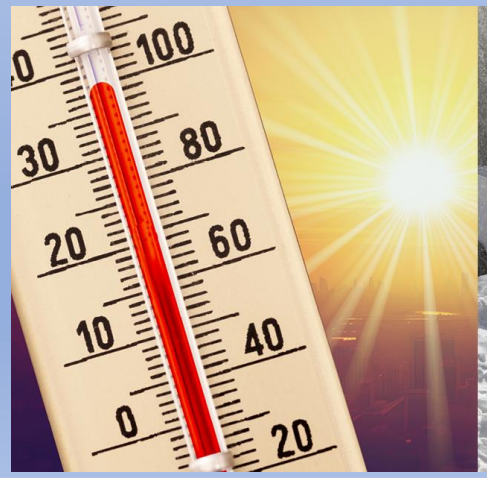
Weathering the Storm: Health Impact of Severe Weather

From Heatwaves to Deep Freezes: Supporting Health in Extreme Weather









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Project Rationale

- In 2025, Oswego County looked to improve risk communications by working with community leaders on message development around severe weather.
- In 2026, Oswego County wanted to take messages about the health impact of severe weather to front line staff working with vulnerable populations.







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About our project

- Partner with Oswego County Opportunities.
- Educate the boots on the ground!
- Provide mitigation supplies and education to at risk populations.
- Evaluate knowledge, behavior and/or environmental changes that occur from this engagement.

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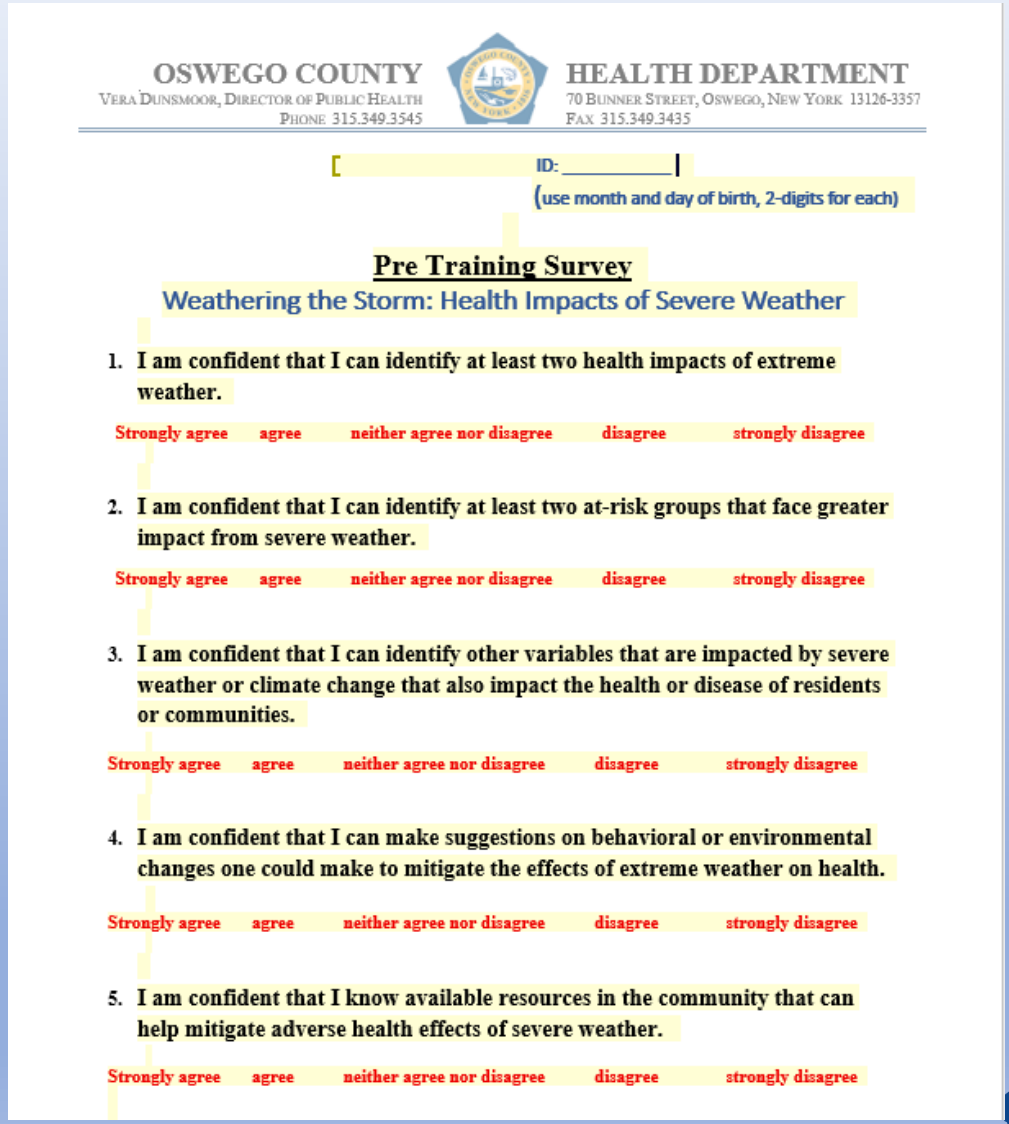
Two phases of the project:

1. Train staff from Oswego County Opportunities on the ***Health Impact of Severe Weather***
2. Creation and distribution of severe weather kits

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Phase One

- Two training were held and twenty-one OCO staff were trained:
  - Nutrition Services staff (4)
  - Home Health Homes staff (4)
  - OPTIONS staff (3)
  - Health Educator (1)
  - Outreach staff (4)
  - Cancer Services (1)
  - Prevention Services staff (4)



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[ID: _____]
(use month and day of birth, 2-digits for each)

Pre Training Survey

Weathering the Storm: Health Impacts of Severe Weather

1. I am confident that I can identify at least two health impacts of extreme weather.

Strongly agree agree neither agree nor disagree disagree strongly disagree

2. I am confident that I can identify at least two at-risk groups that face greater impact from severe weather.

Strongly agree agree neither agree nor disagree disagree strongly disagree

3. I am confident that I can identify other variables that are impacted by severe weather or climate change that also impact the health or disease of residents or communities.

Strongly agree agree neither agree nor disagree disagree strongly disagree

4. I am confident that I can make suggestions on behavioral or environmental changes one could make to mitigate the effects of extreme weather on health.

Strongly agree agree neither agree nor disagree disagree strongly disagree

5. I am confident that I know available resources in the community that can help mitigate adverse health effects of severe weather.

Strongly agree agree neither agree nor disagree disagree strongly disagree

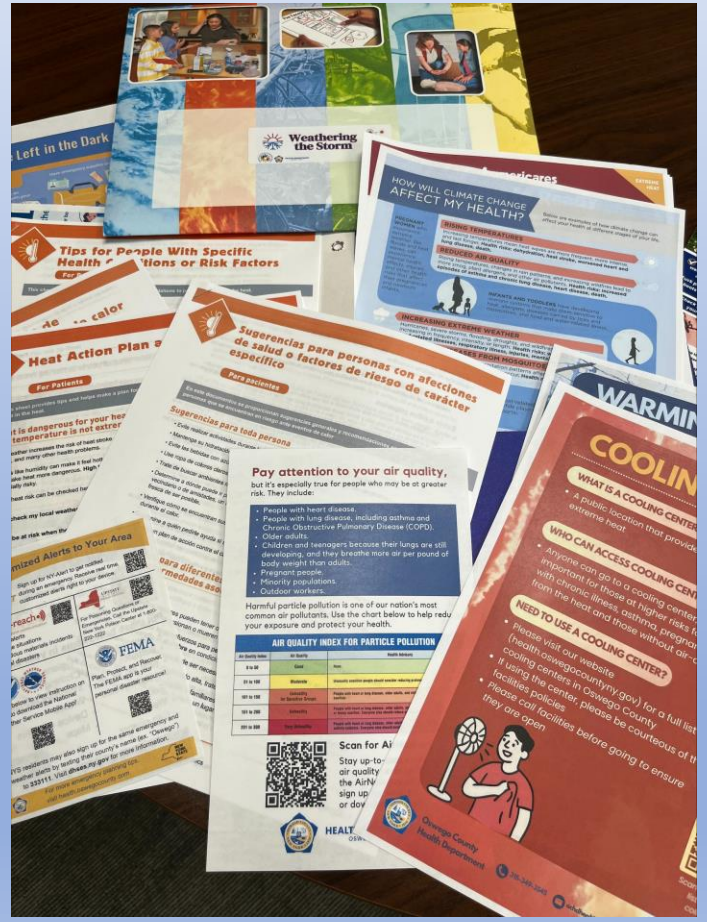
Learning objectives

- Identify at least two health impacts of extreme weather.
- Identify at least two at-risk group, that could face greater impact from severe weather, that your agency works with.
- Discuss other variables, that can impact health or disease, that are influenced by changing weather or climate.
- Suggest behavioral or environmental changes one could make to mitigate the effects of climate change or extreme weather on health
- Recommend local resources available to help mitigate adverse health effects due to severe weather.

Following the training:

- Participants indicated significant increases in:
  - Knowledge of available resources to mitigate adverse health effects of severe weather
  - Knowledge of variables impacted by severe weather, that also impact health or disease of residents (such as vector borne disease, increased mold, air and water quality)
  - Confidence in the ability to make suggestions on behavioral or environmental changes to mitigate the health effects of extreme weather

Education



- Materials were provided to staff at OCO as part of their training.
- Folders were included with the warm weather kits OCO had to engage with their participants with.

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Phase Two



- Kit distribution via our partners at OCO.
- They distributed 72 kits
  - Congregate meal sites
  - SAF
  - Street outreach
  - OPTIONS
- Kits used to start a discussion around severe weather, impact on health and mitigation

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Warm Weather Kits

- Rechargeable handheld fan
- Sunscreen
- Tick kits
- Insect repellent
- Collapsable water bottle
- Emergency blankets
- Rain ponchos
- Cooling towels
- Body wipes

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Post-engagement Evaluation Survey

- OCO staff were asked to collect post-engagement evaluation surveys from folks that received kits
- 72 warm weather kits were distributed
- 41post-engagement surveys were returned (57% response rate)
- 11 different zip codes were reported



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Post Engagement Survey

Directions: Please complete this form following any engagement in which cold weather or warm weather kits are distributed. If possible, complete after the resident may have had time to use some of the resources given or made any changes in behavior or the environment in which they live. Fill in the zip code of the resident and what type of kit received. Space is available to capture any comments or discussions, or suggestions of potential changes that can be checked, or used to start discussions.

Zip code: _____ Program: _____ Type of Kit: Cold weather Warm weather

1. What type of behavioral change did you make to protect yourself or your family from extreme weather:

2. What type of environmental changes did you make to protect yourself or your family from extreme weather (heat/cold)

General

- ☐ I talked to my health care provider about how extreme weather affects my health conditions and the medications I take
- ☐ Signed up for weather alerts (AirNow, 333111, FEMA, local news station, other apps)
- ☐ Called DSS to look for services that might help protect me from extreme weather
- ☐ Called to get more information on HEAP
- ☐ Signed up for HEAP
- ☐ Took steps to weatherize my home
- ☐ Created an emergency kit for my home or car
- ☐ Made plans to check on family, friends or neighbors during extreme weather
- ☐ Made plans to have family, friends, or neighbors check on me during extreme weather

Cold Weather

- ☐ Used foot or hand warmers on cold days
- ☐ Used hat, scarf or gloves to protect exposed skin and prevent heat loss
- ☐ Dressed in layers to prevent hypothermia
- ☐ Sought medical care due to symptoms of hypothermia or frostbite
- ☐ Take more breaks when doing outdoor activities in extreme temperatures to protect my health
- ☐ Utilized the CODE BLUE shelter
- ☐ Visited a warming center

Warm Weather

- ☐ Drank extra water on hot days
- ☐ Visited a cooling center
- ☐ Purchased or acquired a fan or air conditioner
- ☐ Changed the time of day I performed tasks to avoid the hottest part of the day
- ☐ Used sunscreen
- ☐ Used insect repellent
- ☐ Conduct daily tick checks
- ☐ Sought medical care due to symptoms of heat related illness
- ☐ Used cooling a towel to cool off on hot days
- ☐ Check the AirNow App for air quality warnings before doing outdoor activities
- ☐ Made a heat action plan with my health care provider

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Most Common Changes Reported:

- 85% reported drinking more water on hot days
- 61% reported signing up for weather alerts
- 41% reported making plans to check on family, friends, or neighbors
- 41% reported making plans to have family, friends or neighbors check on them
- 39% took steps to weatherize home
- 27% reported talking to a provider about how heat affects their medications or medical condition

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Other Comments…

“Made effort to talk to Dr. about new meds”
“Looking to update our windows for the cold”
“Checked for ticks”
“not walking to places as much on hot days”
“used HEAP to get a new air conditioner”
“Curtains”
“used sunscreen and bug spray”
“access cooling center”
“do my laundry earlier in the morning”
“Wear light colored clothing”

Lessons Learned/Successes

- Working with trusted partners helped to get feedback from the at-risk population we were looking to educate

- All staff agreed or strongly agreed that they were confident that they knew resources in the community that could help mitigate adverse health effects of severe weather.

- Those that received kits all had positive feedback and took steps to mitigate the effects of severe weather.

Challenges

- Local budget process and timing of grant made it difficult to distribute cold weather kits, however some sleeping bags were distributed because evening were still dropping into the high 30s to 40s at night.

- Getting post-engagement surveys returned.







Stay tuned!

AP Photo/Kevin Rivoli February 10, 2026

Winter Weather Kits

Cold Weather Kits

- Hats
- Gloves
- Scarf
- Hand/foot warmers
- Chap stick
- Body wipes
- Emergency blankets
- Tick kits







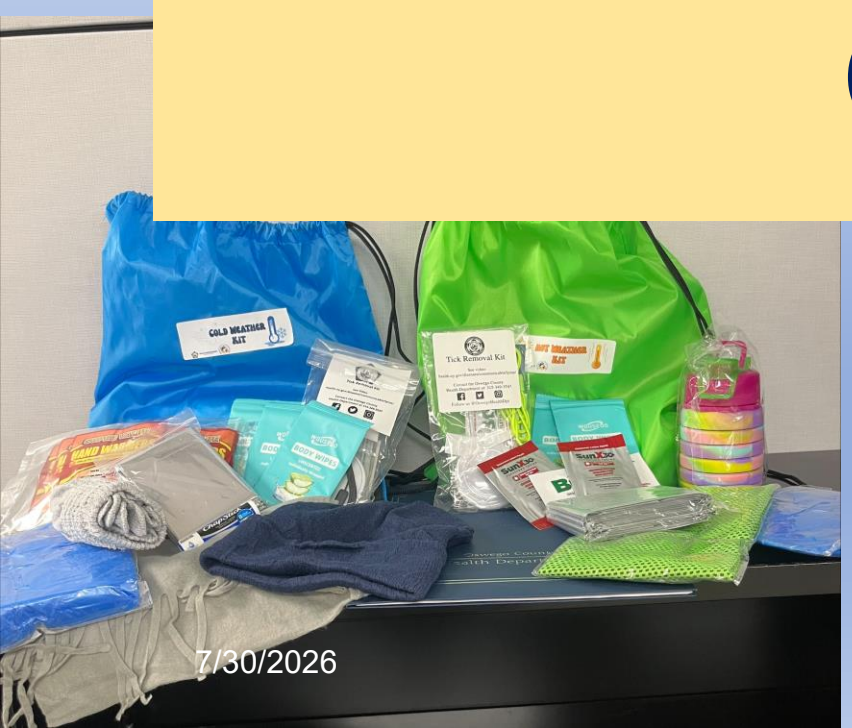
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COLD WEATHER KIT


COLD WEATHER KIT
Tick Removal Kit
HOT WEATHER KIT
BODY WIPES

Questions?


COLD WEATHER KIT
Tick Removal Kit
HOT WEATHER KIT
BODY WIPES




HOT WEATHER KIT
COLD WEATHER KIT

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