

# Heat Vulnerability, Equity and Health

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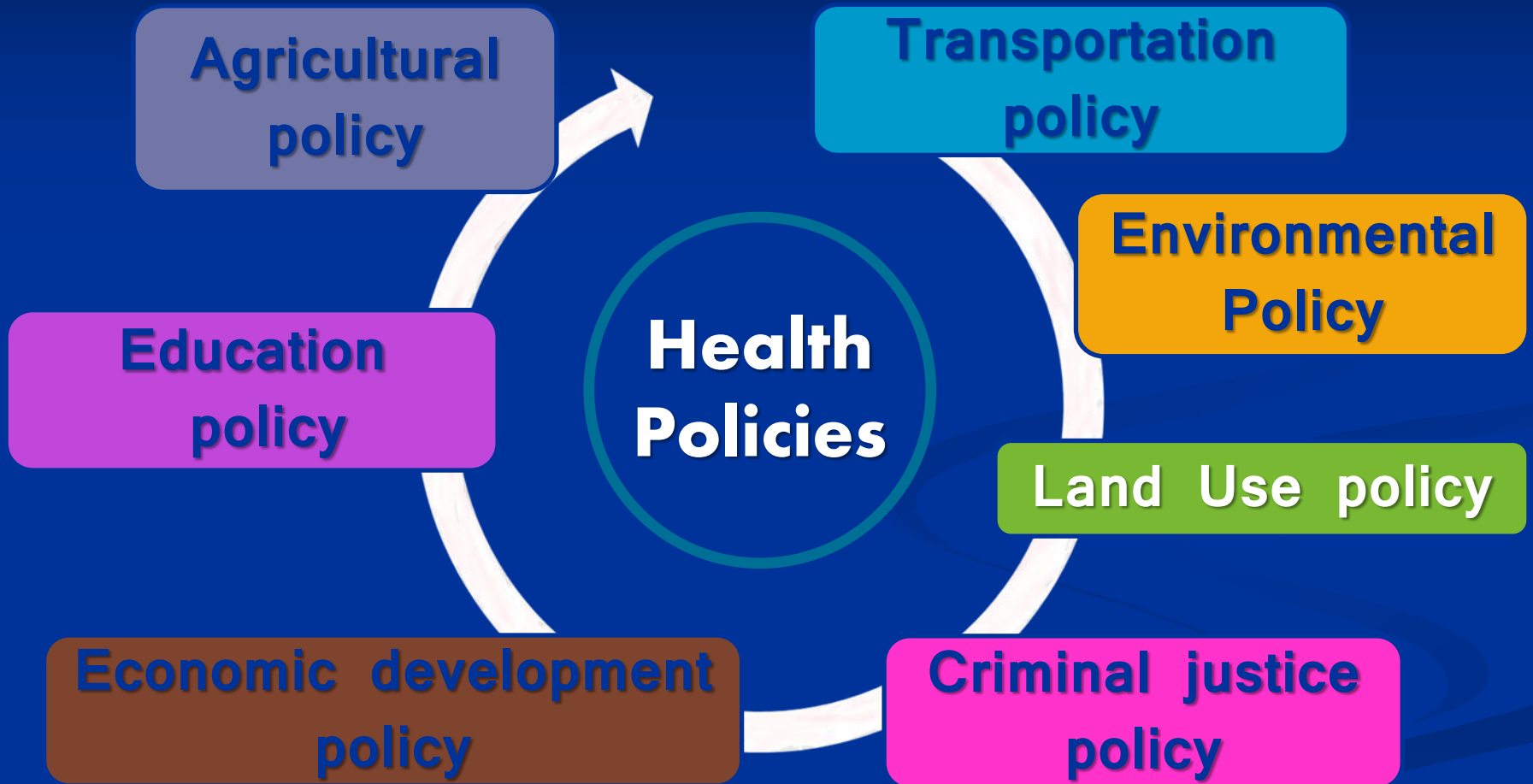
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# Public Health 3.0: Health in All Policies

- ❖ “Health in All Policies” is one way to operationalize the understanding that:
  - Our health is affected by multiple sectors of our society.
  - Those sectors all have a role to play in helping us get and stay healthy.



# So what are health policies?



# Shifting the frame: **Health EQUITY**

**Equity** in health is the absence of systematic disparities in health (or in the major determinants of health) between social groups who have different levels of underlying social advantages/disadvantages—that is, different positions in the social hierarchy (Braveman & Gruskin, 2003).



# What is health and where does it come from?

**Health: “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” (WHO)**

**Public health: “what we as a society do to collectively assure the conditions in which people can be healthy.” (IOM, 1988)**

**Conditions are where we:**

**Live**

**Learn**

**Work**

**Play**

**and social, environmental, economic, and political factors that affect us**



# Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)



Where people are born, grow, live, work,  
and age



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# Vulnerability

- In the field of climate change, vulnerability is the degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, the adverse effects of climate variability and change.
- From a health perspective, vulnerability can be defined as the summation of all risk and protective factors that ultimately determine whether a subpopulation or region experiences adverse health outcomes due to climate change.

Source: Caziani et al, Climate Change 2007



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# Delaware's Reality



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# Who is Impacted by Heat related Climate Changes?

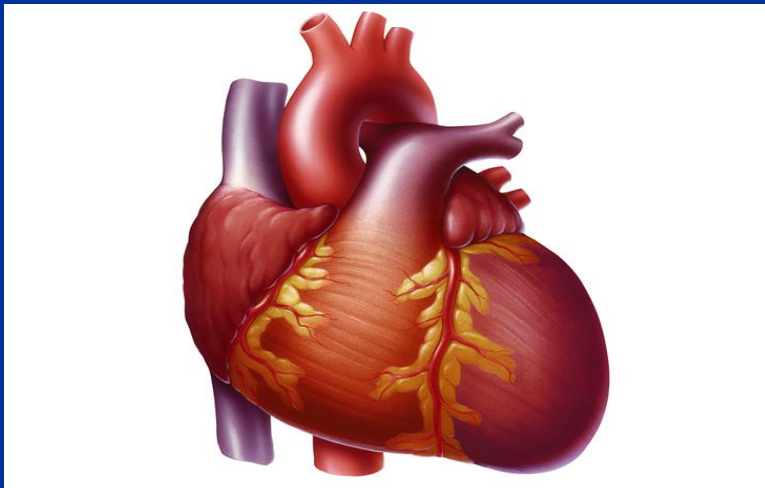


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# Boston Hospital Study 2012

The study examined the associations between temperature variations and the changes in heart disease markers in the blood of participants who were diagnosed with cardiovascular problems.



# Heat and Heart Disease

- The most important finding was that higher apparent temperatures were associated with higher levels of inflammation in the patients with preexisting heart health conditions. That is, the higher the temperature, the higher the levels of biomarkers in the blood of these patients with heart failure problem
- Elevated temperature can trigger heart attacks and other cardiovascular problems in people being treated for heart disease. For the first time, this study identifies a possible explanation for how temperature can cause heart failure.



# How do we deal with these challenges?





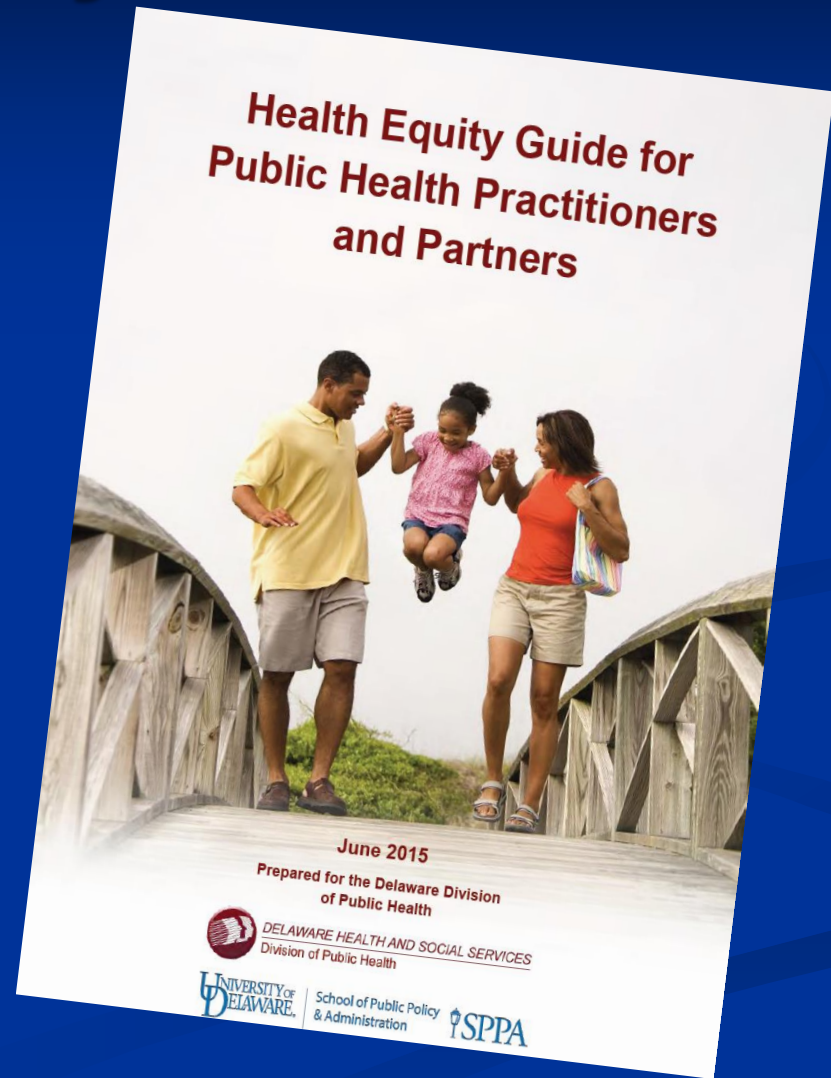
# Boston Example

- As a result of the information they learned, Boston Hospital implemented a pilot project where they screened their heart disease patients before hospital release to ask questions about access to air conditioning
- Those who indicated that they did not have access to air conditioning were provided with window air conditioning units



# Health Equity Guide Tool

Section 6  
of the  
guide  
explores  
Policy  
Oriented  
Strategies







Thank you

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