

Webinar Series on Wildfire Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

Health System Resilience in the Era of Complex Wildfire Risk

Virtual | June 1, 8, 15, 2026 | 2:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M. ET

Webinar Series Overview

Wildfires are increasing in frequency, intensity, and geographic reach across the United States, with year-round fire seasons and smoke exposure affecting populations far beyond fire-prone regions. At the same time, there is growing recognition that wildfires are not only environmental or emergency management challenges, but significant and escalating public health threats. Recent wildfire events have exposed persistent gaps in how health systems and public health agencies prepare for, respond to, and recover from these incidents. A more coordinated, visible, and sustained national conversation is needed to connect these efforts, raise awareness, and accelerate practical solutions that protect health before, during, and after wildfire events.

The purpose of this webinar series is to elevate understanding of the health impacts of wildfires across the full disaster cycle and to foster a more integrated, health-centered conversation at a national level. Through a series of publicly accessible discussions, the webinars will examine how wildfire risk affects individual and community health, health care delivery, and public health systems, with particular attention to prevention and preparedness, acute response, and long-term recovery. The series is designed to highlight emerging evidence, share real-world experiences, and explore practical approaches to protecting health in the context of increasing wildfire risk. Discussions will focus on key issues such as smoke exposure and air quality, continuity of care, protection of vulnerable populations, behavioral health impacts, and the longer-term health consequences of displacement and recovery. Rather than producing formal recommendations, the series will aim to raise awareness, connect perspectives across sectors and disciplines, and identify key challenges and opportunities for strengthening health-focused wildfire preparedness, response, and recovery.

[Webinar 1 \(June 1\): PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS: Understanding and Anticipating Health Risks of Wildfires](#)

[Webinar 2 \(June 8\): RESPONSE: Health System Response During Wildfires](#)

[Webinar 3 \(June 15\): RECOVERY: Wildfire Recovery, Adaptation, and Long-Term Health Impacts](#)

Forum on Medical and Public Health Preparedness for Disasters and Emergencies

This webinar series is being convened under the auspices of the Forum on Medical and Public Health Preparedness for Disasters and Emergencies, a standing activity of the National Academies. The Forum on Medical and Public Health Preparedness for Disasters and Emergencies provides a neutral venue to identify and elevate critical issues in medical and public health emergency preparedness and response proactively—with a focus on bridging the gaps between research, policy, and practice. The Forum fosters in-depth discussion and collaboration to examine barriers, identify research, explore innovative operational and policy solutions, and inspire action among stakeholders in support of sustaining and advancing health security. Formed in 2007, the Forum on Medical and Public Health Preparedness for Disasters and Emergencies convenes and engages leaders at federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial levels

Staff Contact Information

Lisa M. Brown, M.P.H., Senior Program Officer lbrown@nas.edu

Learn more about our work here: <https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/forum-on-medical-and-public-health-preparedness-for-disasters-and-emergencies>

WEBINAR 1 – PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS: Understanding and Anticipating Health Risks of Wildfires

June 1, 2026, 2:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M. ET

SESSION I	WELCOME AND OVERVIEW
2:00 PM	<p>Welcome and Opening Remarks</p> <p>Birgitte Messerschmidt Director, Research National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)</p> <p>Welcome and Opening from the Forum on Medical and Public Health Preparedness for Disasters and Emergencies Forum</p> <p>Asha M. George, Forum Co-Chair Executive Director Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense at the Atlantic Council</p> <p>W. Craig Vanderwagen, Forum Co-Chair Co-Founder and Director East West Protection, LLC</p>
SESSION II	RISK INTELLIGENCE AND DATA INTEGRATION
2:15 PM	<p><i>This session will explore the role of risk intelligence and data integration in supporting situational awareness and informing decision-making, with attention to data sharing, coordination, and application in wildfire prevention and preparedness.</i></p> <p>Rebecca Harned Principal Research Scientist Fire Safety Research Institute UL Research Institutes</p> <p>Yulia Iossifova Carroll Associate Director for Science Division of Environmental Health Science and Practice (DEHSP) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)</p>
SESSION III	HEALTH INTERVENTIONS AND COMMUNITY NEEDS
3:00 PM	<p><i>This session will highlight health interventions and community needs related to wildfire prevention and preparedness, with a focus on clinical care, public health measures, and addressing the needs of vulnerable populations.</i></p> <p>Reshma Gupta Chief of Population Health and Accountable Care UC Davis Health</p>

SESSION IV INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE

3:15 PM

This session will highlight infrastructure and operational resilience in wildfire prevention and preparedness, including facilities, supply chains, workforce, and continuity planning.

Heidi Huber-Stearns

Co-Director, Institute for Resilient Organizations, Communities, and Environments
Associate Research Professor
Director, Ecosystem Workforce Program
Director, Center for Wildfire Smoke Research and Practice
University of Oregon

Hussam Mahmoud

Craig E. Philip Endowed Chair of Engineering
Professor, Civil and Environmental Engineering
Director, Vanderbilt Center for Sustainability, Energy and Climate (VSEC)
Head, SoPHle Lab (Socio-Physical and Hazard-Integrated Environment)

SESSION V SYSTEMS COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

3:45 PM

This session will highlight systems coordination and partnerships across health systems, public health, and emergency management to support effective action in wildfire prevention and preparedness.

Anna Tate

Director, Domestic Programs
Project HOPE

SESSION VI RESEARCH, INNOVATION, AND POLICY TRANSLATION

4:00 PM

This session will highlight research, innovation, and policy approaches to prevent and prepare for wildfires.

Christina Rust

Wildfire Policy Specialist
National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

SESSION VII REFLECTIONS AND CROSS-CUTTING INSIGHTS

4:15 PM

This session will engage panelists and participants in reflecting on key themes from the session, drawing connections across perspectives, and identifying cross-cutting challenges and opportunities for strengthening health system preparedness, response, and recovery in the context of wildfires.

Discussion with Panelists and Participants

SESSION VIII CLOSING REFLECTIONS

4:45 PM

Closing Remarks

Birgitte Messerschmidt

Director, Research
National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

Asha M. George, *Forum Co-Chair*

Executive Director
Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense at the Atlantic Council

W. Craig Vanderwagen, *Forum Co-Chair*

Co-Founder and Director
East West Protection, LLC

5:00 PM

ADJOURN WEBINAR 1

NEAR-FINAL

WEBINAR 2 – RESPONSE: Health System Response During Wildfires

June 8, 2026, 2:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M. ET

SESSION I	WELCOME AND OVERVIEW
2:00 PM	<p>Welcome and Opening Remarks</p> <p>Michele Steinberg Director, Wildfire Division National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)</p> <p>Welcome and Opening from the Forum on Medical and Public Health Preparedness for Disasters and Emergencies Forum</p> <p>Asha M. George, Forum Co-Chair Executive Director Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense at the Atlantic Council</p> <p>W. Craig Vanderwagen, Forum Co-Chair Co-Founder and Director East West Protection, LLC</p>
SESSION II	RISK INTELLIGENCE AND DATA INTEGRATION
2:15 PM	<p><i>This session will explore the role of risk intelligence and data integration in supporting situational awareness and informing decision-making, with attention to data sharing, coordination, and application in wildfire response.</i></p> <p>Phillip SeLegue Staff Chief Intelligence (Intel) Program CAL FIRE</p> <p>Molly Middleton Environmental Epidemiologist Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment</p> <p>Radhika Ratnabalasuriar Medical Epidemiologist Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment</p>
SESSION III	HEALTH INTERVENTIONS AND COMMUNITY NEEDS
2:45 PM	<p><i>This session will highlight health interventions and community needs related to wildfire response, with a focus on wildland firefighter exposures and health, clinical care, public health measures, and addressing the needs of vulnerable populations.</i></p>

David Eisenman

Professor, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and Fielding UCLA School of Public Health
Director, Center for Public Health and Disasters
Co-Director, Center for Healthy Climate Solutions
Division of General Internal Medicine and Health Services Research

Alissa Cordner

Professor of Sociology, Chair of Sociology
Whitman College

SESSION IV OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE AND SYSTEMS COORDINATION

3:15 PM

This session will examine how health systems maintain operations and coordinate effectively during wildfire events, with a focus on the interdependencies between infrastructure resilience and cross-sector partnerships.

Mitch Saruwatari

Director, National Emergency Management
Kaiser Permanente

Jeremy Maggin

Regional Physician Director, Emergency Preparedness
Southern California and Hawaii
Kaiser Permanente

Francesca Tanglao

Regional Emergency Management Program Leader
Southern California and Hawaii
Kaiser Permanente

SESSION V RESEARCH, INNOVATION, AND POLICY TRANSLATION

4:00 PM

This session will highlight research, innovation, and policy approaches to respond to wildfires.

Julie Abrams

Executive Director
Healthcare Ready

David Abramson

Clinical Professor
Director, NYU Center for Public Health Disaster Science
Public Health Extreme Events Research (PHEER) Network
NYU School of Global Public Health

SESSION VI REFLECTIONS AND CROSS-CUTTING INSIGHTS

4:30 PM

This session will engage panelists and participants in reflecting on key themes from the session, drawing connections across perspectives, and identifying cross-cutting

challenges and opportunities for strengthening health system preparedness, response, and recovery in the context of wildfires.

Discussion with Panelists and Participants

SESSION VII CLOSING REFLECTIONS

4:45 PM

Closing Remarks

Michele Steinberg

Director, Wildfire Division
National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

Asha M. George, Forum Co-Chair

Executive Director
Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense at the Atlantic Council

W. Craig Vanderwagen, Forum Co-Chair

Co-Founder and Director
East West Protection, LLC

5:00 PM

ADJOURN WEBINAR 2

WEBINAR 3 – RECOVERY: Wildfire Recovery, Adaptation, and Long-Term Health Impacts

June 15, 2026, 2:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M. ET

SESSION I	WELCOME AND OVERVIEW
2:00 PM	<p data-bbox="337 415 784 451">Welcome and Opening Remarks</p> <p data-bbox="337 478 1052 814">Merritt D. Schreiber Professor of Clinical Pediatrics Department of Pediatrics Lundquist Institute Harbor-UCLA Medical Center Disaster Program UCLA-Duke National Center for Child Traumatic Stress Professor of Clinical Psychiatry Department of Psychiatry David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA</p> <p data-bbox="337 850 1490 913">Welcome and Opening from the Forum on Medical and Public Health Preparedness for Disasters and Emergencies Forum</p> <p data-bbox="337 949 1117 1050">Asha M. George, Forum Co-Chair Executive Director Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense at the Atlantic Council</p> <p data-bbox="337 1085 878 1186">W. Craig Vanderwagen, Forum Co-Chair Co-Founder and Director East West Protection, LLC</p>
SESSION II	RISK INTELLIGENCE AND DATA INTEGRATION
2:15 PM	<p data-bbox="337 1289 1442 1390"><i>This session will explore the role of risk intelligence and data integration in supporting situational awareness and informing decision-making, with attention to data sharing, coordination, and application in wildfire recovery.</i></p> <p data-bbox="337 1425 1062 1526">Mark Wilson Director of the Center for Analytical & Exposure Science UL Research Institutes' Chemical Insights</p> <p data-bbox="337 1562 1130 1722">Ruben Juarez UHERO-HMSA Distinguished Professor of Health Economics Professor of Economics UHERO Research Fellow University of Hawaii at Mānoa</p>

Kenny Fent

Captain, U.S. Public Health Service
Team Lead, National Firefighter Registry for Cancer (NFR)
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

SESSION III HEALTH INTERVENTIONS AND COMMUNITY NEEDS

3:00 PM

This session will highlight health interventions and community needs related to wildfire recovery, with a focus on clinical care, public health measures, and addressing the needs of vulnerable populations.

Arthur Chang

Chief Medical Officer
Division of Environmental Health Science and Practice (DEHSP)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Nicole Maccalla

Director, Evaluation & Improvement, Southern California Clinical and Translational Science Institute
Expert Lecturer, Rossier School of Education
University of Southern California

Sara Jahnke

Director of the Center for Fire, Rescue & EMS Health Research
NDRI USA, Inc.

SESSION IV SYSTEMS COORDINATION, RESEARCH, AND RECOVERY INNOVATION

3:45 PM

This session will explore how systems coordination, applied research, and recovery-focused innovation can strengthen community resilience and inform policy and operational strategies before, during, and after wildfire events.

Andrew Whelton

Professor
Lyles School of Civil and Construction Engineering
School of Sustainability and Environmental Engineering
Purdue University

Joseph Wartman

Director, Natural Hazard and Disaster Reconnaissance Facility (RAPID)
Professor, Civil and Environmental Engineering
University of Washington

SESSION V REFLECTIONS AND CROSS-CUTTING INSIGHTS

4:15 PM

This session will engage panelists and participants in reflecting on key themes from the session, drawing connections across perspectives, and identifying cross-cutting challenges and opportunities for strengthening health system preparedness, response, and recovery in the context of wildfires.

Discussion with Panelists and Participants

SESSION VI CLOSING REFLECTIONS

4:45 PM

Closing Remarks

Merritt D. Schreiber

Professor of Clinical Pediatrics
Department of Pediatrics
Lundquist Institute
Harbor-UCLA Medical Center
Disaster Program
UCLA-Duke National Center for Child Traumatic Stress
Professor of Clinical Psychiatry
Department of Psychiatry
David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA

Asha M. George, *Forum Co-Chair*

Executive Director
Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense at the Atlantic Council

W. Craig Vanderwagen, *Forum Co-Chair*

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5:00 PM

ADJOURN WEBINAR 3