

October 2020

To the CEOs of:

AETNA (CVS HEALTH)
ANTHEM
CENTENE CORPORATION
CIGNA HEALTH
HCSC
HIGHMARK
HUMANA
KAISER
METROPOLITAN
UNITEDHEALTH

On behalf of our organizations that work for health and environmental justice, we call upon your companies, as health insurance industry leaders, to align your corporate investments with your mission to protect human health and to divest from the fossil fuel industries that are driving climate change, the greatest threat to human health.¹

Climate change is a health-risk multiplier and an existential threat to the health of all Americans.² The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that even half a degree of warming beyond 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels would significantly worsen the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people.³ It will continue to cause worsening air pollution, food and water shortages, increased prevalence of infectious diseases, extreme weather events, and significant social, economic and political upheaval.

America's health insurance companies have embraced the movement to address social determinants of health (SDOH), demonstrating a serious commitment to addressing the holistic barriers that Americans have to healthy living. In 2019, allied health insurers launched Project Link, coordinating innovative solutions to ensure that strategies to address SDOH improve affordability of health care and health status.⁴ Many health insurers have also already committed sustained philanthropic support to local community organizations providing housing services, mobile clinics, and health literacy initiatives. This significant shift in investment, however, has not been paired with divestment from assets that cause climate change and pose a material public health risk locally and globally.

¹ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)32594-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)32594-7/fulltext)

² <https://nca2014.globalchange.gov/report/sectors/human-health>

³ [IPCC 2018. Report for Policymakers.](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/2018/)

⁴ <https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/payer-issues/health-insurance-industry-launches-sdoh-project.html>

The burdens of health harms from climate impacts unfairly fall the hardest on low-income communities, many of which are Black, Indigenous, and Latinx^{5,6} and on our children.⁷ Global scientific community consensus recognizes that a rapid transition from a fossil fuel economy to a clean energy future is necessary to address climate change. This includes accelerating the rate at which insurers, including the health insurance industry, end financial investment in fossil fuel industries. Continuing to invest in the industries driving the climate crisis undermines the health of patients in America and abroad.

At present, over 1,000 institutions globally have pledged divestment from fossil fuels of about \$14.4 trillion. Importantly, over 110 financial institutions, including roughly 30 insurers worldwide, have limited or ended their investments in fossil fuels. U.S health insurers are concerning absent from this list.

Because of the grave harms to health caused by fossil fuels we are calling on you to take the following measures:

1. Divest assets from all coal, oil and gas companies that are not aligned with a 1.5°C pathway.
2. Bring stewardship activities, membership of trade associations, and public positions as shareholders and corporate citizens more broadly in line with a 1.5°C pathway in a transparent way. This must include forceful advocacy for a green and just recovery from COVID-19.
3. Reinvest into climate solutions that safeguard public health, including but not limited to renewable energy, energy and water efficiency, and sustainable food systems.

We respectfully request a response from you on this issue. Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

350 Colorado
350 NYC
350 Portland
350 Triangle

Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR)
PSR - Arizona Chapter
PSR - Florida Chapter
PSR - Greater Boston

⁵ <https://nca2014.globalchange.gov/report/sectors/human-health#statement-16520>

⁶ https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2767260?utm_source=For_The_Media&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=ftm_links&utm_term=061820

⁷ <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/136/5/992>

350.org
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Medical Student Association
Call to Action Colorado
Catholic Network US
Climate Health Now
Climate Resolve
Connecticut Citizen Action Group
Doctors For A Healthy US, LLC
Earth Action, Inc.
Earth Guardians
Eat for the Earth
Florida for Good
Franciscan Action Network
Fremont County, CO Indivisible
Friends of the Earth
George Mason University Center for Climate
Change Communication
Greenpeace USA
Health Care for All Fremont County
Health Care Without Harm
Long Beach Alliance for Clean Energy
Mazaska Talks
Medical Society Consortium on Climate and
Health
Medical Students for a Sustainable Future
Nature Conservation Advocates for Climate
Initiative
No Coal in Oakland
Northwest Quality Care
Peace, Justice, Sustainability NOW

PSR- Kansas City
PSR - Maine Chapter
PSR - Oregon
PSR- San Francisco Bay
PSR- Tennessee Chapter
PSR - Pennsylvania
PSR - Washington
Polluters Out
Public Citizen
Public Health Awakened
Rainforest Action Network
Rapid Shift Network
Sierra Club
South Beach District 6 Democratic Club of
San Francisco
South Carolina Health Professionals for
Climate Action
Sunflower Alliance
Texas Campaign for the Environment
The Climate Center
The Islamic Medical Association of North
America (IMANA)
The River Project
Unite North Metro Denver
Wellspring Healing Center, LLC
Women's Earth and Climate Action Network
(WECAN)