

Preparing Health Systems for Climate Change: HHS Office of Climate Change and Health Equity

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NICHM Webinar
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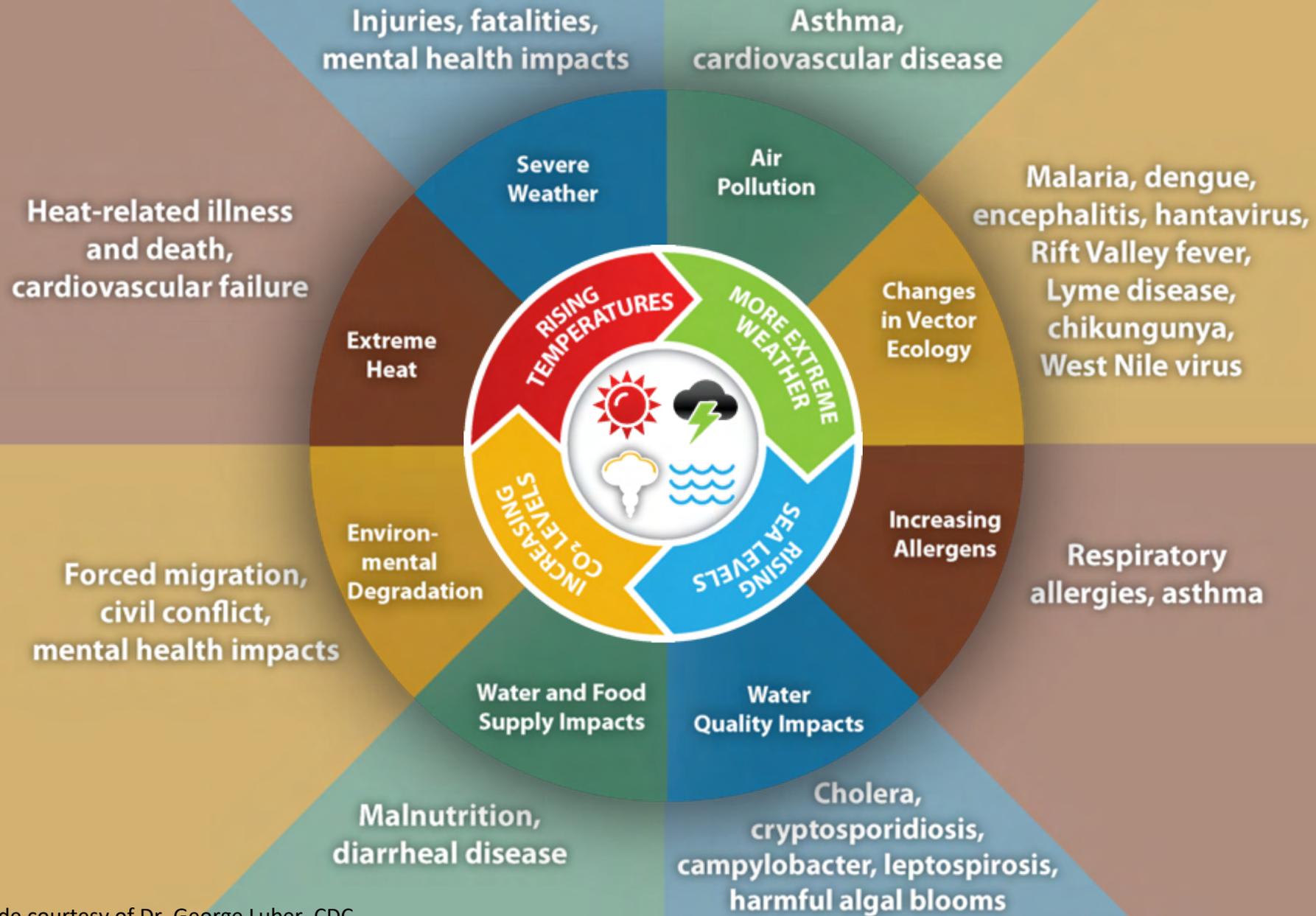


Office of
Climate Change
and Health Equity

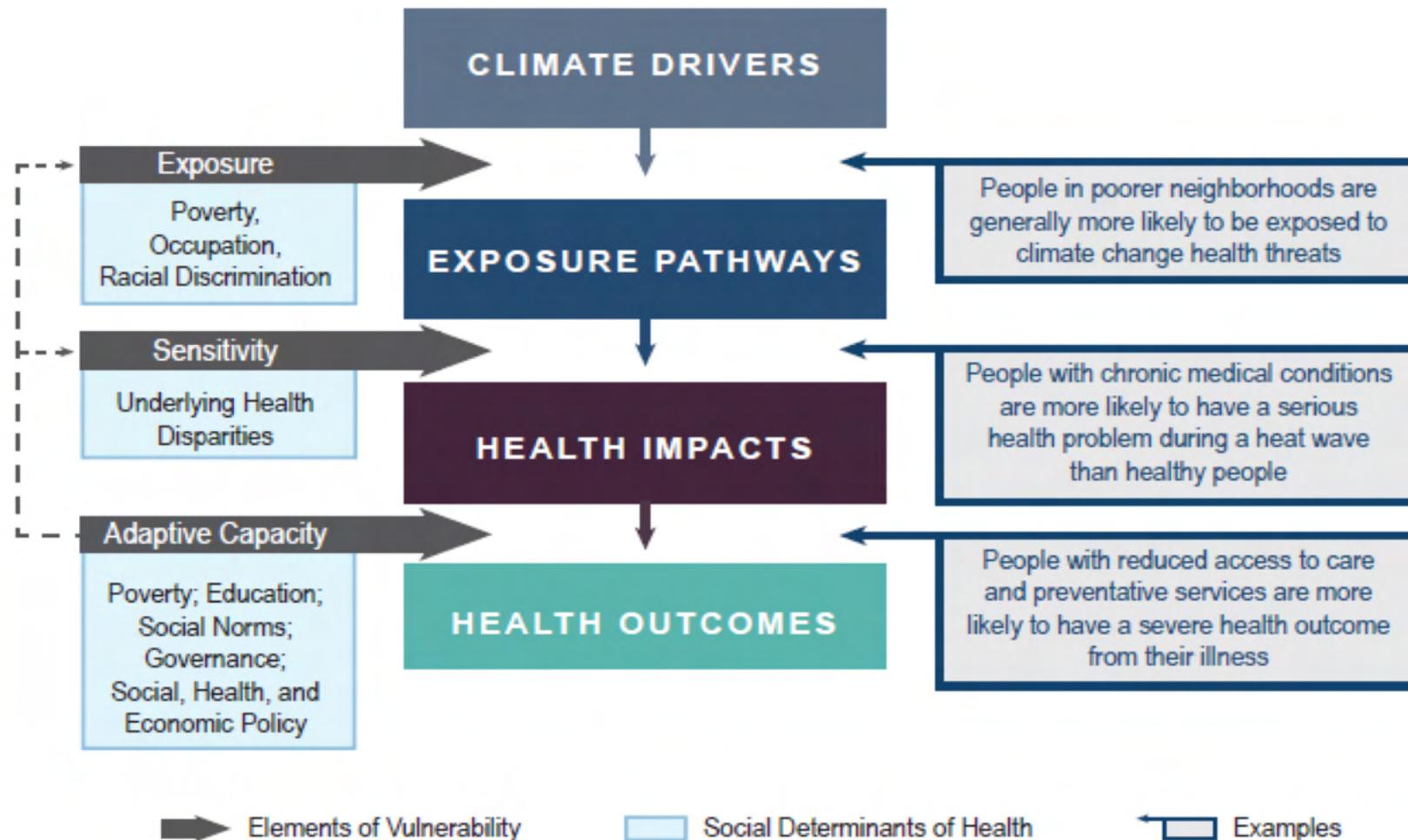
Overview

- Impacts of Climate Change on Health and Health Systems
- Linking Climate Change and Health Equity
- OCCHE and our role in helping health systems prepare for climate change

The Public Health Impacts of Climate Change



Intersection of Social Determinants of Health and Vulnerability



Climate and Health Assessment, 2016

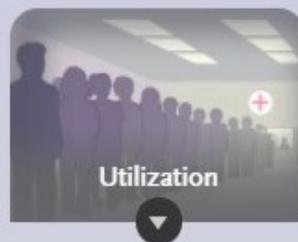
What does this mean for health care systems?

- Elderly populations
 - **Heat-related morbidity, air pollution effects, West Nile Virus and other ID's, Extreme events**
- Low-income populations
 - **Heat-related morbidity, respiratory diseases from air pollution, molds and pollens, vector-borne diseases (esp. outdoor workers), flooding and extreme events**
- People with chronic medical conditions (durable medical equipment)
 - **Heat or other weather extremes and loss of electricity in homes**
- People with disabilities
 - **Heat or other extreme events and ability to shelter, avoid exposures**
- All populations
 - **Need to improve Social Determinants of Health through infrastructure and other climate change related investments**

HUMAN HEALTH

HEALTH CARE DELIVERY

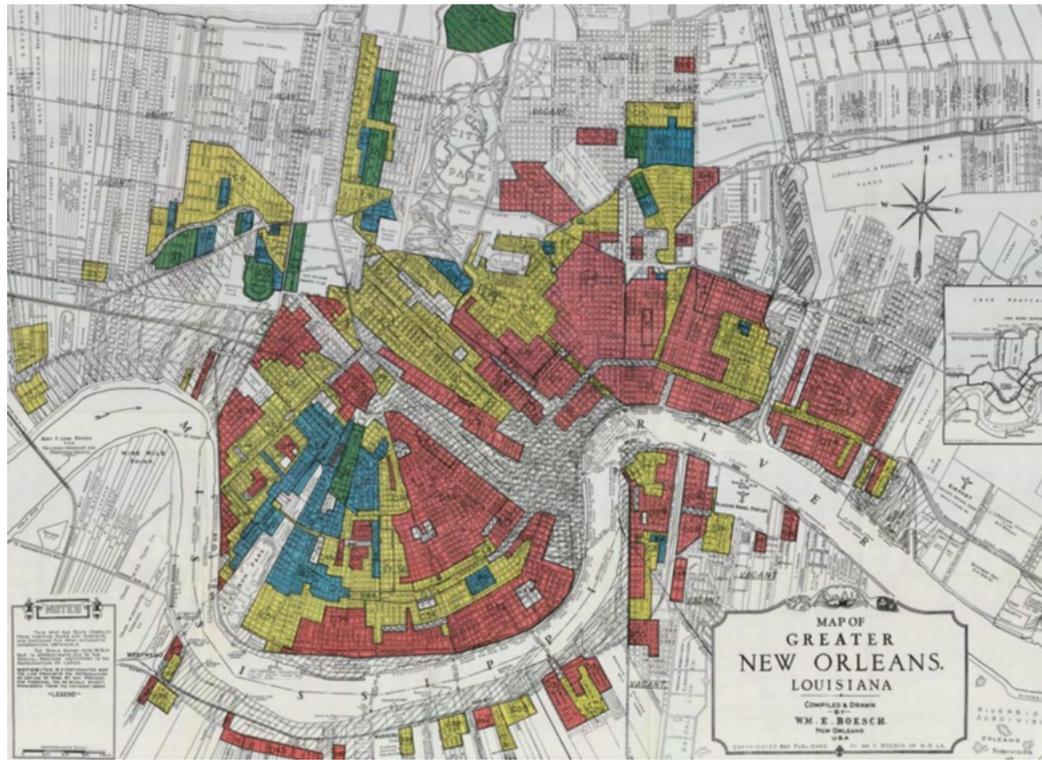
EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON HEALTH SYSTEMS



WHAT HEALTH SYSTEMS CAN DO



How do climate change and health equity intersect? *The story of Hurricane Katrina*

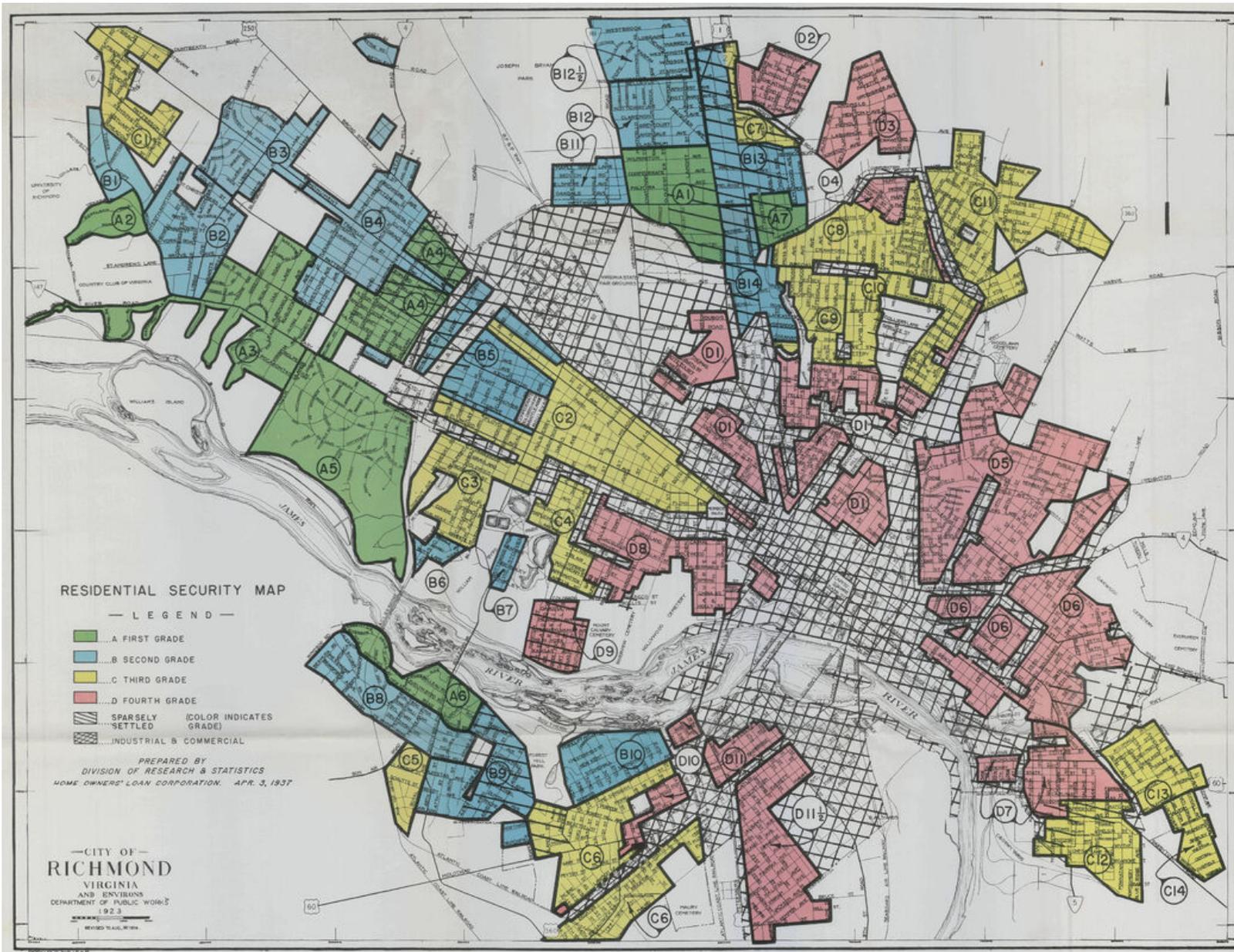


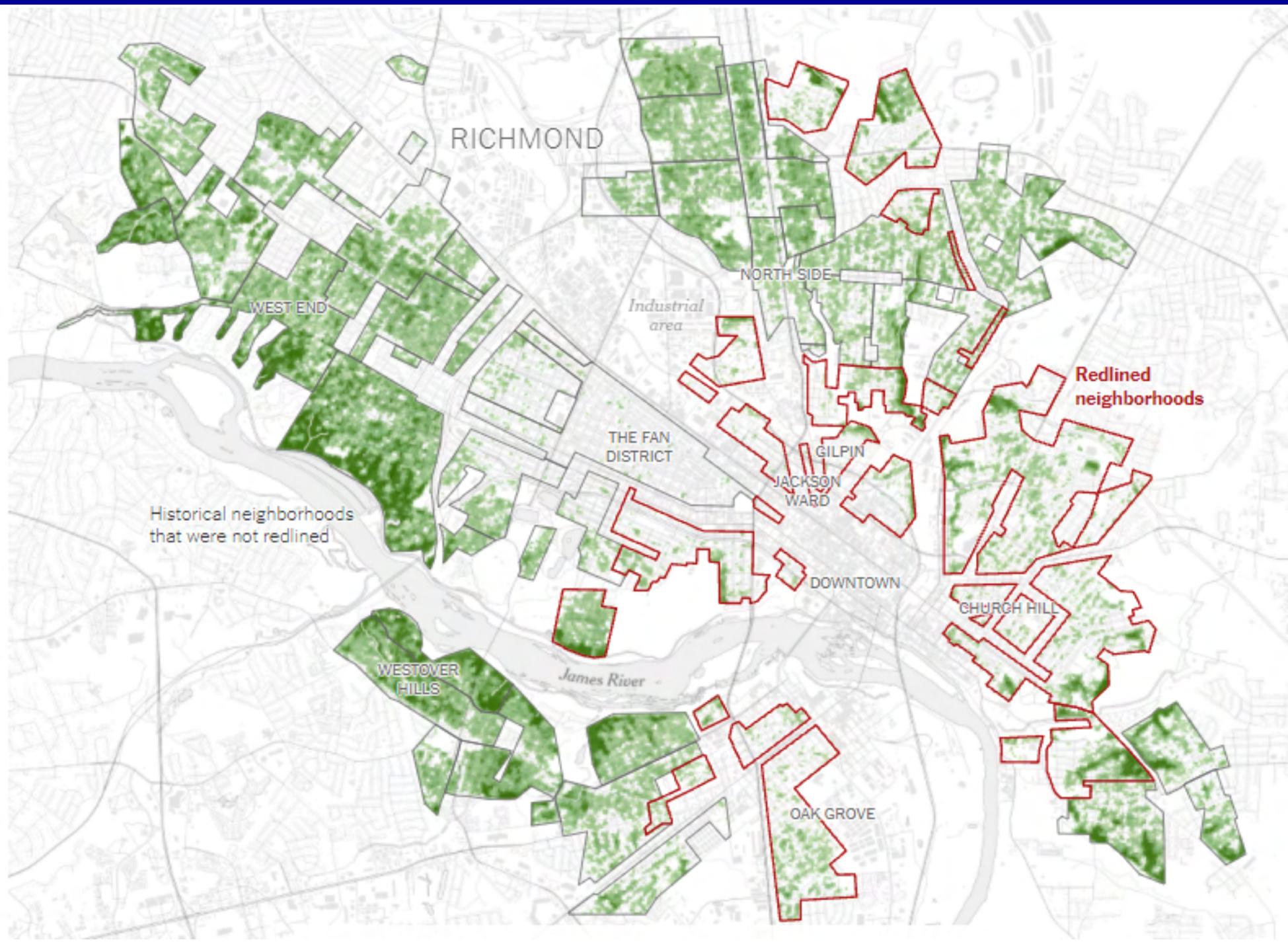
September 7, 2005

Heat and Redlining

1923, City of Richmond, Virginia – “Residential Security Map”

Source: Nelson, Winling, Marciano, Connolly, et al., [Mapping Inequality](#)



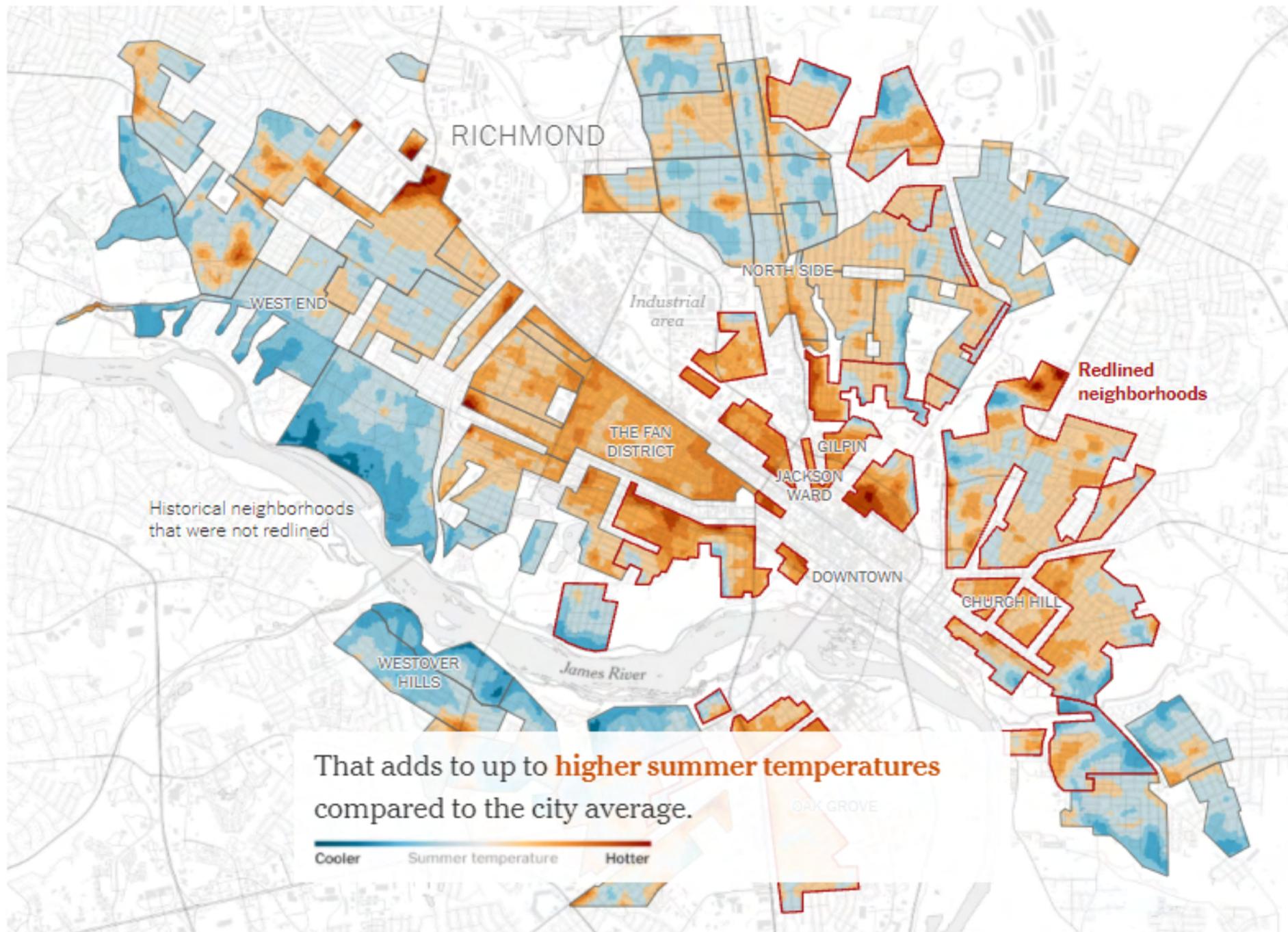


Formerly redlined areas have less **tree cover** today than areas that weren't redlined.

Source: New York Times. How Decades of Racist Housing Policy Left Neighborhoods Sweltering, Plumer and Popovich, 2020 from Hoffman, Shandas, and Pendleton, Climate, 2020



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Origins of the Office of Climate Change and Health Equity

E.O. 14008 - “Tackling the Climate Crisis”

- HHS mandates (Section 222(d))
 - Office of Climate Change and Health Equity
 - Interagency Working Group to Decrease Risk of Climate Change to Children, the Elderly, People with Disabilities, and the Vulnerable
 - Biennial Health Care System
 - Readiness Advisory Council



QUOTES



History will judge us for the actions we take today to protect our world and our health from climate change.

Xavier Becerra
HHS Secretary for Health



COVID-19 highlighted the inequities faced throughout our nation... same groups struggling the most with the effects of climate change on our health.

Admiral Rachel Levine
HHS Assistant Secretary for Health



OCCHE...to bring America's world-class medical community into the fight against climate change—a fight for our health that ensures no community is left behind.

Gina McCarthy
National Climate Advisor

Office of Climate Change & Health Equity (OCCHE)

Priority 1: Climate & Health Resilience for Most Vulnerable

Priority 2: Climate Actions to Reduce Health Disparities

Priority 3: Health Sector Resilience & Decarbonization



Resilient Health Systems

- Capturing **community and health system vulnerabilities** and logging adaptation gaps
- **Enhancing the resilience of health systems and communities** to climate change effects
- Building on existing networks and plans to **develop a national plan for health adaptation**

Low-Carbon Health Systems

- Coordinating Federal health system **greenhouse gas accounting and reduction targets**
- Partnership with private health sector to develop an **action plan for reductions** via incentives, technical assistance, policy guidance, applied research, toolkits, training, use of regulatory authorities as needed, etc.



BRIEFING ROOM

FACT SHEET: President Biden Signs Executive Order Catalyzing America's Clean Energy Economy Through Federal Sustainability

DECEMBER 08, 2021 • STATEMENTS AND RELEASES

U.S. Government Will Lead by Example to Leverage Scale and Procurement Power to Drive Clean, Healthy, and Resilient Operations

Today, President Biden will sign an executive order that demonstrates how the United States will leverage its scale and procurement power to lead by example in tackling the climate crisis. The executive order will reduce emissions across federal operations, invest in American clean energy industries and manufacturing, and create clean, healthy, and resilient communities. The President is building on his whole-of-government effort to tackle the climate crisis in a way that creates well-paying jobs, grows industries, and makes the country more economically competitive.

The President's executive order directs the federal government to use its scale and procurement power to achieve five ambitious goals:

- 100 percent carbon pollution-free electricity (CFE) by 2030, at least half of which will be locally supplied clean energy to meet 24/7 demand;
- 100 percent zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) acquisitions by 2035, including 100 percent zero-emission light-duty vehicle acquisitions by 2027;
- Net-zero emissions from federal procurement no later than 2050, including a Buy Clean policy to promote use of construction materials with lower embodied emissions;
- A net-zero emissions building portfolio by 2045, including a 50 percent emissions reduction by 2032; and
- Net-zero emissions from overall federal operations by 2050, including a 65 percent emissions reduction by 2030.



Priority 1: Climate and Health Resilience for Most Vulnerable

- Current
 - **Extreme Heat Working Group focused on better connecting resources (health, financial) to those most in need**
 - **Partnership with Low-Income Energy Assistance Program and Medicare/Medicaid to explore climate adaptation**
- Anticipated
 - **Convene new Interagency Working Group**
 - **Build local capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from climate change related health threats**

The screenshot displays the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit website. The main heading is "Catalyzing Investment and Building Capacity in Las Cruces". Below this, a sub-heading reads: "Planning with extreme weather thresholds catalyzes a \$400,000 green infrastructure investment in a historically underserved neighborhood in Las Cruces, New Mexico." The page includes a "Steps to Resilience" sidebar with a progress indicator for "Take Action". The main content area features a map of Las Cruces and text describing the city's location and climate challenges.

U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit

Steps to Resilience Case Studies Tools Expertise Regions Topics

Catalyzing Investment and Building Capacity in Las Cruces

Planning with extreme weather thresholds catalyzes a \$400,000 green infrastructure investment in a historically underserved neighborhood in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Case Studies > Catalyzing Investment and Building Capacity in Las Cruces >

Sometimes, having a plan is all it takes to catalyze an investment in resilience.

That's what the City of Las Cruces, New Mexico, found as they began to consider changing climate conditions in their planning. Las Cruces is located just 46 miles north of the Mexican border, and much of the city lies within the geologic floodplain of the Rio Grande river. It is the economic and geographic center of the Mesilla Valley. More than half of the city's population is Hispanic or Latino, and 24 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.

The climate of Las Cruces is characteristic of an arid desert, with large diurnal (daily) and moderate annual temperature ranges, variable precipitation, low relative humidity, and abundant sunshine. Sunny days comprise more than 80 percent of all days in an average year.

More than half of the annual precipitation falls from July through September in intense monsoon thunderstorms, which can dump inches of rain in a single storm, resulting in flash flooding—a large concern for the community. Both monsoon storms and spring weather systems are often accompanied by strong wind and blowing dust, which can have serious impacts on transportation and public health.

A partnership to explore community-defined thresholds

Las Cruces has one full-time sustainability officer, Lisa LaRoque, who recognized the benefits of tapping

Steps to Resilience
This content supports the following step:

- 1 Explore Hazards
- 2 Assess Vulnerability & Risks
- 3 Investigate Options
- 4 Prioritize & Plan
- 5 Take Action

Tools
U.S. Drought Portal >

Topics
Built Environment > Social Equity >
Built Environment > Planning and Land Use >
Built Environment > Community Resilience >
Health > Extreme Heat—NIHHS >
Health > Extreme Events >
Water > Flooding >

Additional Resources
Project Report: Critical Thresholds, Extreme Weather, and Building Resilience (PDF) >
Project Overview (PDF) >

Priority 2: Climate Actions to Reduce Health Disparities

- Current
 - **Exploring innovative models for health systems to improve social determinants of health**
- Anticipated
 - **Build and promote technical capacity to assess health implications of major infrastructure projects**



Proposed Rule: Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; HHS Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters for 2023 FRN p. 693:

“HHS further seeks to explore how Exchanges and their constituent organizations can more fully prepare for the harmful impacts of climate change on their enrollees. ...

Generally, HHS seeks input on how Qualified Health Plans can more effectively:

- (1) Determine likely climate impacts on their enrollees and particularly the most vulnerable enrollees;
- (2) determine potential costs of these impacts;
- (3) develop plans to mitigate catastrophic and chronic impacts for these populations (that is, plans for resilience); and
- (4) Take responsibility for greenhouse gas emission reduction across the networks of organizations that make up their exchanges.”

Policy Areas for Exploration

Resilience

- Update guidance on preparedness with attention to vulnerable populations
- Increase flexibilities in innovation programs (CMCS, CMMI) to get supports to vulnerable beneficiaries
- Introduce climate-sensitive indicators into measurement updates (HHS, CMS)
- Invest in increased technical assistance on preparedness (HPP, etc.)

Decarbonization

- Select high-impact, evidence-based actions (priority interventions on Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions)
- Accelerate GHG accounting and GHG tracking tool development
- Increase technical assistance (vehicles in place, funding needed to support health systems and other facility types)
- Explore incentives to engage hospitals on decarbonization (e.g., tax incentives, CMS payment)



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Thank you!

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Visit us online at www.hhs.gov/ocche