

## Letter to the Editor (LTE) Template

As a health professional, I am concerned by the growing threat extreme heat presents to [state, city, community].

Extreme heat now kills more people in the United States than any other weather-related hazard, and the number of heat-related illnesses is even higher. [insert sentence on how extreme heat is harming health in your local area/state]. These impacts fall most heavily on children, outdoor workers, people with chronic illnesses, the elderly, and those without access to cooling.

The good news is that this harm is preventable—if we act before heat hits. Places that prepare for extreme heat can help save lives, reduce strain on hospitals and infrastructure, avoid economic losses, and build healthier, more resilient neighborhoods.

Together, we can make heat safety a public health priority and ensure every resident has the resources needed to stay safe as temperatures rise because of climate change.

[Name, credentials]

[City/State]

## Op-Ed Guidance

### Outline

1. How are you seeing extreme heat show up in your patients or communities?
  - a. Share an anecdote
2. Why are you talking about this issue?
  - a. Extreme heat is the deadliest weather-related hazard
  - b. Cases of heat-related illness are high
  - c. Specific populations are at greater risk
3. What is Heat Safety Week? How are you/people in your community taking action?
4. What are ongoing needs/solutions for your community?
  - a. Can use the policy suggestions from the [toolkit](#) or provide your own:
    - i. Establish the right to cooling
    - ii. Protect energy access during extreme heat events.
    - iii. Secure heat protections in all workplaces, like paid rest, water, and shade requirements.
    - iv. Protect children: Keep kids safe from extreme heat at school and childcare.
    - v. Plan for Heat: Require Local and State Heat Emergency Planning.
5. What is your ask/call to action?
  - a. More health professionals educating themselves and their patients on heat safety
  - b. More health professionals speaking out and advocating for solutions
  - c. Elected officials or governments enacting policies/solutions

## Key Evidence and Messages

- The National Integrated Heat Health Information System (NIHHIS) has designated May 18–22, 2026, as National Heat Safety Week, a week-long campaign to raise awareness about the dangers of extreme heat and promote heat safety actions across the country.
- Heat-related illness is the [leading cause of weather-related deaths](#) in the U.S.
- [13.2 million households](#) in the U.S. report being too hot for more than a day.
- [80 million people](#) struggle to pay their utility bills.
- The elderly face high risks of mortality during heat waves from risk factors like chronic disease, impaired physiology, and social isolation.
- Workers face some of the most acute risks. Heat protections can [prevent deaths](#), reduce [workers' compensation claims](#), decrease [employee turnover](#), and even [increase productivity](#).
- Children are also particularly vulnerable. They need spaces to grow, learn, and play that are capable of protecting them from heat.
- Places that prepare for acute and chronic heat can [prevent deaths](#) and avoid [infrastructure failures](#) and [economic losses](#), while creating more livable communities where residents can thrive.
- Too many communities — particularly those that have been historically overburdened by pollution and disinvestment — are being left to face this threat without adequate support or planning.