

# WNC -Physicians for Social Responsibility Quarterly Newsletter

## Anti-Vax? What is going on?

I grew up in a household that taught vaccines save lives and are one of the greatest public health achievements of all time. The United States has always been a leader in the development and provision of life saving vaccines for use both at home and throughout the world. Overnight things have changed. Notorious anti-vaxer Robert F Kennedy Jr is now the head of Health and Human Services. This is the same RFK Jr who touts the false claim that MMR vaccines cause autism, long after the medical community has agreed that the original claims published in 1998 (and subsequently retracted) by Andrew Wakefield were based on bad science and have since been debunked. Vaccines save lives. No ifs and or buts about it. According to the World Health Organization vaccines have saved over 154 million lives over the last 50 years with the measles vaccine having the largest impact. Do we really want to relive the pre-vaccine era? Poor leadership and misinformation won't take long to erode our public health system, which had until recently been looked up to as the crown jewel in the world. Don't believe me? Just take a visit to Gaines County in West Texas

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## Are We Ready for a Nuclear Arms Race in Space?

Donald Trump has proposed a satellite-based missile defense system which he has dubbed the "Golden Dome". As if ground based nuclear weapons aren't bad enough, now we must worry about nuclear weapons in space. Imagine North Korea hacking into our satellites and initiating an attack on the U.S. with our own weapons... it doesn't sound like a good idea.

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## Climate Change Impacts Extreme Weather Events – Hurricane Helene

Climatologists have concluded that extreme weather events are more frequent and intense due to human-induced climate change. The rise in global temperatures secondary to greenhouse gas emissions leads to increased frequency of heat waves, heavy rainfall events

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Next PSR Meeting: Friday June 20<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 pm (meetings third Friday of each month at First Congregation Church at 20 Oak St. Asheville)

Climate Change Workgroup :  
**TBD**

### Upcoming Events:

Asheville People's Hearing  
Climate Change Testimonials –  
Highland Brewing- Wednesday  
June 18<sup>th</sup> 6-8 pm.



Chairperson- Brita Clark

Secretary- Terry Clark

Treasurer- Bert Crain

Editor- Scott Mahan

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### Anti- Vax (continued)

which is experiencing a measles outbreak. There have been 508 cases in Gaines County as of May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Cases have spread throughout Texas, and to neighboring areas in New Mexico and Oklahoma. These cases are linked to low vaccination rates. Measles is a highly infectious disease, that is 100% vaccine preventable. Now HHS is recommending against COVID vaccination for children and pregnant women. Where does the craziness stop?

-C. Scott Mahan, MD

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### Nuclear Arms Space Race (continued)

Who benefits from this new high-risk proposal? Certainly not the American people, or the world at large. I suppose a few might benefit... Elon Musk's SpaceX seems like a likely candidate. Apparently plans are already in the works that have SpaceX taking the lead. Who else might benefit? Large defense contractors... Lockheed Martin has already come out in support. I for one am not in favor of a space-based arms race. Trump and his cronies estimate the cost for his Golden Dome at 175 Billion dollars, while the CBO predicts a cost closer to 1 Trillion. He has even offered to allow Canada to benefit for free, provided they become our 51<sup>st</sup> state. I am sure they are excited about the offer. It is nice to see all the tax dollars saved by cutting USAID and the firing of dedicated government employees going to such a noble cause.

-C. Scott Mahan, MD

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### Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events (continued)

with associated flooding, and changes in wind patterns. While some areas will see increased rainfall, other areas will experience more profound droughts. Rising ocean temperatures increase the intensity of tropical storms and hurricanes. Additionally, storms may take longer to decay and thereby threaten inland areas which previously were felt to be safe from a storm's destruction. An example of an extreme weather event was on full display on September 26<sup>th</sup> when Hurricane Helene made landfall on the Florida panhandle and then proceeded to lay a wide swath of destruction up through Western North Carolina and further into Virginia and Tennessee. A rapid analysis by the World Weather Attribution Group published just 2 weeks after the storm concluded that Helene's rainfall was 10% heavier due to climate change and the rainfall over the 3 day period (just prior to and during Helene) was 70% more likely to have occurred due to climate change. They go on to conclude that if we continue on the present course of rising global temperature related to human activities such extreme weather events will only increase in frequency and intensity.

-C. Scott Mahan MD

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