Global warming is happening as a result of increased greenhouse gases. As a result, there are increased climate-related disasters including fires, floods, mudslides, and hurricanes. These disasters have immediate and severe impact on the health and well-being of our patients and communities as well as long-term deleterious health consequences. In 2017 alone, damage in the United States as a result of extreme weather events was estimated to cost over $300 billion. Nursing leadership needs to understand how best to respond to these disasters as well as how the healthcare industry can minimize its impact by decreasing its own greenhouse gas contributions.

**Special Issue Overview**

In this special issue on climate change and health, Dr. Elizabeth Schenk provides an overview of nursing’s role in climate change. Dr. Jasmine Travers and colleagues offer a call to action for nurses in policy, research, scholarship, clinical practice, and service and offer the Research, Education, Advocacy, and Practice (REAP) model as a framework to guide actions.

Dr. Goodwin Veenema and colleagues provide a review of the 2017 hurricane season and the ongoing response and recovery efforts. The authors highlight some of the challenges nurses and nursing leadership may face if a disaster occurred in their region.

The economics of climate change and the intersection of conflict, violence, and migration are presented by Drs. Patrice Nicholas and Suellen Breakey. In this article, the authors report on the economic consequences of air pollution as well as climate-related weather events. The role of nursing and recommendations made by the International Council of Nurses are reviewed.

Focusing on emergency visits due to extreme heat, Dr. Adrienne Wald provides an integrated review of 17 studies. The review underscores the importance of emergency department services in weather-related events as well as provides estimates of the economic impact.

Dr. Jennifer Francis, a senior scientist at Woods Hole Research Center, provides a readily accessible explanation of the arctic influences on our weather patterns. This explanation is timely as the Midwest recently experienced record cold weather related to the polar vortex.

**Managing the Consequences**

As healthcare leaders, nurses are increasingly finding ourselves in the position of managing the consequences of climate-related events and the lasting impact to our communities. Hospitals in Florida, Texas, and Louisiana have remained permanently closed as a result of hurricanes and flooding, creating healthcare access issues in communities already struggling to provide services to vulnerable citizens. Hospitals and healthcare providers in California are dealing with fires and resulting mudslides that devastate communities. Hospitals and healthcare facilities are often the largest employers in small and rural communities; therefore, the lasting financial impact to these regions is devastating. We are beginning to understand the impact post-traumatic stress disorder and various other physical,

continued on page 8
psychological, and social sequelaes has on our communities, including caregivers and first responders.

A growing number of nurse scientists, community health practitioners, economists, and policy experts are studying both the causes and impact of climate-related health consequences on individuals and communities. Their research and policy recommendations will continue to inform our leadership practice and curriculum globally as well as locally. $