



# Advocacy & Organizing

Temerty  
Medicine

UNITY HEALTH  
TORONTO

FMF, November 11, 2023  
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# Disclosures

Relationships with potential sponsors: none  
Potential conflicts-of-interest: None financial.

\*I approach concepts discussed today from my position of privilege as a physician, and my specific social locations and experiences that inform my work but can also contribute to my own blindspots.\*

# Land acknowledgement

- We wish to acknowledge this land, which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations.

# Objectives

1. Define advocacy and recognize its critical role in family medicine
2. Identify health inequities that require community- and system-level advocacy
3. Learn practical skills and discuss examples of addressing health inequities through system-level advocacy

# **Social Justice Advocacy Defined**

"Advocacy is about power.  
It means influencing those who have power on behalf of  
those who do not."

Teasdale 1998

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**Why engage in social justice  
advocacy as health  
professionals?**



## WHAT MAKES CANADIANS SICK?

50%

### YOUR LIFE

INCOME  
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT  
DISABILITY  
EDUCATION  
SOCIAL EXCLUSION  
SOCIAL SAFETY NET  
GENDER  
EMPLOYMENT/WORKING CONDITIONS  
RACE  
ABORIGINAL STATUS  
SAFE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD  
HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS  
COMMUNITY BELONGING

25%

### YOUR HEALTH CARE

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE  
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM  
WAIT TIMES

15%

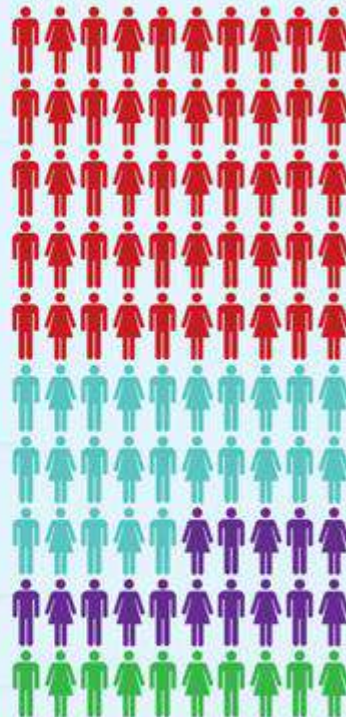
### YOUR BIOLOGY

BIOLOGY  
GENETICS

10%

### YOUR ENVIRONMENT

AIR QUALITY  
CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE



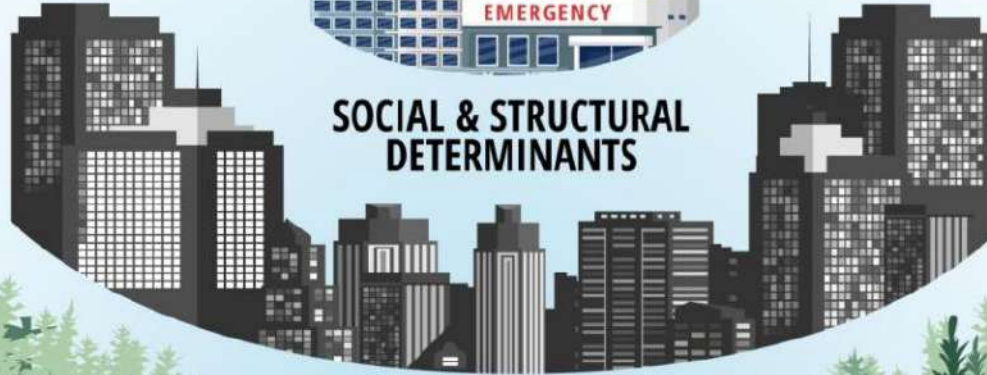
THESE ARE CANADA'S SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH #SDOH

# Healthy Planet, Healthy People

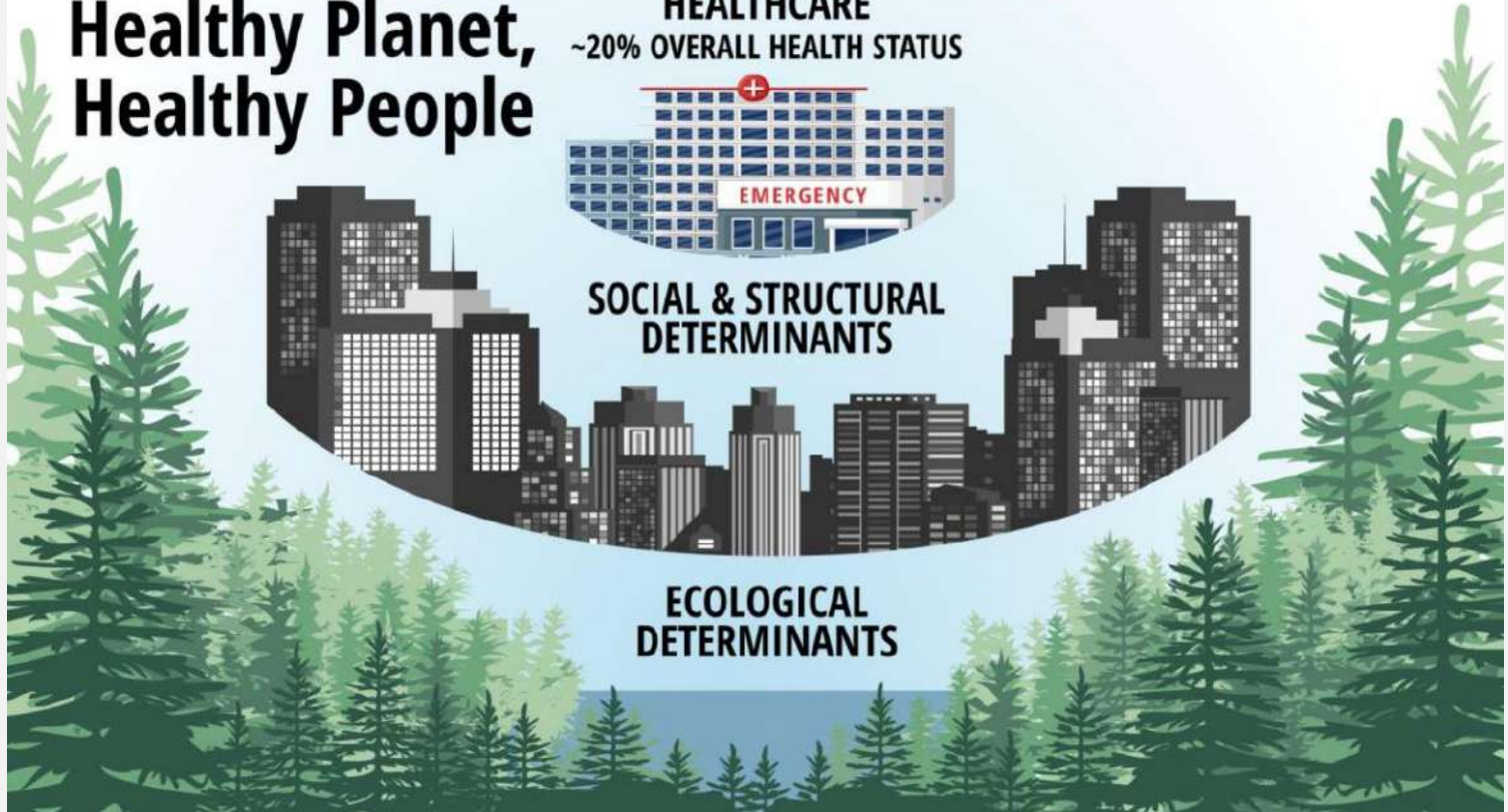
HEALTHCARE  
~20% OVERALL HEALTH STATUS



SOCIAL & STRUCTURAL  
DETERMINANTS



ECOLOGICAL  
DETERMINANTS





# Health Is Political

*Example*

Politics

Economic policy – i.e. low social assistance rates



SDOH

Food insecurity, barriers to exercise, chronic stress



Health

Poorly controlled diabetes and HTN, obesity, vascular complications

# Health Is Political

## *Example*

Politics



ESDOH



Health

Ongoing investment in oil & gas extraction and consumption, policies based on maximizing GDP

Traffic-related air pollution, industrial air pollution, wildfire smoke, extreme heat, outdoor worker, no air conditioning at home

Poorly controlled asthma, eczema, environmental allergies

# Professional Responsibility

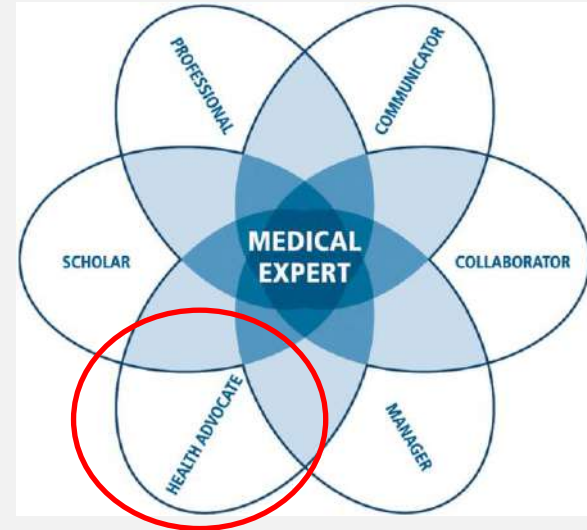
THE COLLEGE OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS  
OF CANADA



LE COLLÈGE DES  
MÉDECINS DE FAMILLE  
DU CANADA



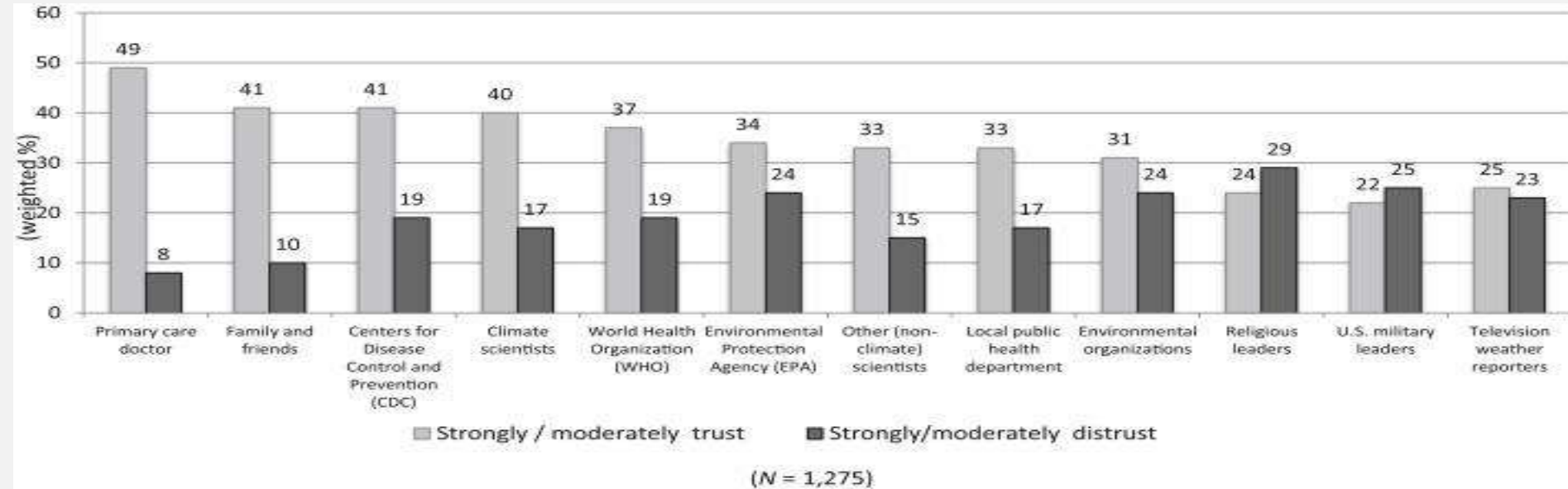
**ROYAL COLLEGE**  
OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF CANADA  
**COLLÈGE ROYAL**  
DES MÉDECINS ET CHIRURGIENS DU CANADA



# How Do We Contribute as HCPs?

- Respected and “surprise” voice
- Relative job security
- Close connection to individuals who are marginalized
- Understanding and authority to speak to research evidence
- Some ability to steer or solicit funding

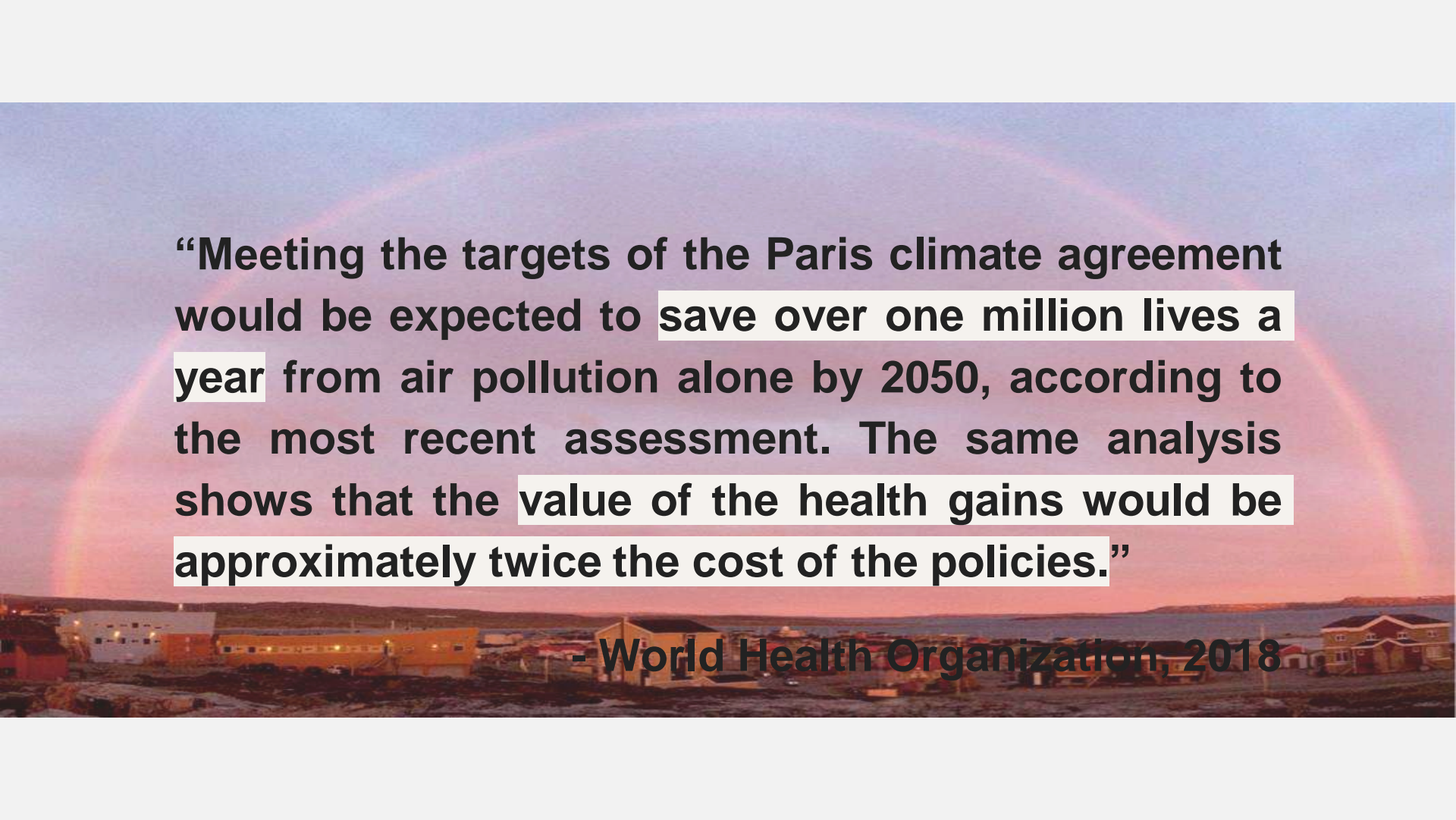
# We are trusted voices



# Why get involved in advocacy?

It's fun and rewarding!





**“Meeting the targets of the Paris climate agreement would be expected to save over one million lives a year from air pollution alone by 2050, according to the most recent assessment. The same analysis shows that the value of the health gains would be approximately twice the cost of the policies.”**

**- World Health Organization, 2018**







Pinned Tweet



**Doctors for XR** @DoctorsXr · Oct 24

**\*BREAKING\***

The editor of [@TheLancet](#), one of the most prestigious medical journals in the world, has come out officially asking all health professionals to engage in non-violent social protest to protect people from the climate & ecological breakdown.

Yes you heard that right.



348

7.6K

13.3K



[Show this thread](#)

# Self-reflection

Think of a time when you've advocated for a patient.

How could you use those same skills to advocate for change on a broader scale?



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# How to begin?

# Advocacy Toolkit

- Step 1: Identify the Issue
- Step 2: Connect with Allies
  - Join a Coalition or Build your own
- Step 3: Set an Objective & Target
- Step 4: Choose your Strategy & Tools
- Step 5: Implement and Evaluate

# Advocacy Toolkit

## Step 1: Identify the Issue

i.e. inadequate bike infrastructure in Toronto

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research the issue and explore the political climate</li><li>• <b>Is there a window of opportunity for policy change?</b></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pilot bike lane installed on Bloor Street in August 2016 after years of advocacy by community groups</li><li>• City Council was to vote on whether to make it permanent in 2017 → many counsellors in opposition, and unclear whether Mayor Tory would support</li></ul> |
|---|--|

# Advocacy Toolkit

## Step 2: Connect with Allies – Join a Coalition or Build Your Own

- Identify peer partners; learn from those with lived experience
- Are colleagues working on similar issues? Or other organizations?
- Who else might be interested in the issue?



# Advocacy Toolkit

## Step 3: Set an Objective & Target

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Set SMART objectives: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound</li><li>• Who can effect the change?</li><li>• What resources are available?</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Objective: make Bloor St bike lane permanent</li><li>• Target: Toronto City Council, Infrastructure &amp; Environment Committee, Mayor Tory</li><li>• Expertise from cycling advocates, health care providers, individuals who have experienced road violence and their families</li><li>• Data on bike lane use, collisions, traffic volumes and travel times, effects on local business</li></ul> |
|---|---|

# How to choose your target & timeline?

- Jurisdiction: federal, provincial, municipal, First Nations
- Players: politicians, political staff, civil servants
- Election cycle, budget cycle
- Legislative session: usually starts in the fall and goes through the spring



# Advocacy Toolkit

## Step 4: Choose Your Strategy, Tactics, & Tools

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scope of activities</li><li>• Specific messaging</li><li>• Advocacy tools or actions<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opinion editorials &amp; blogs</li><li>• Press release, social media blitz</li><li>• Deputations, submissions</li><li>• Direct action</li><li>• Legal action</li><li>• Clinical tools, CME, research</li></ul></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Op-eds, letters, e-mails</li><li>• Deputations</li><li>• Meetings with City councillors</li><li>• Open letter</li><li>• Bike rides</li></ul> |
|--|--|

# Tactics

Tactics are specific actions through which strategy is implemented. Good tactics are:

1. STRATEGIC (does it help us achieve our goal?)
2. MOTIVATIONAL (is it fun & inspiring?)
3. BUILDS LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY (does it support growth of people & bring in new people?)

COMMENTARY

OPINION

# Why doctors support bike lanes: they're healthier for everyone

'Cycling is very effective in promoting good physical and mental health, and it's infrastructure like protected lanes that makes widespread bike use possible.'

By **Peter Sakuls**

**Samantha Green**

▲ Fri., Aug. 11, 2017 | ⌚ 3 min. read



# An Open Letter To Mayor John Tory From Toronto Physicians

*September 28, 2017*

An Open Letter to Mayor John Tory from Toronto Physicians

To: His Worship Mayor John Tory

Cc: Councillor Jaye Robinson (Chair, Public Works and Infrastructure committee)

Councillor Stephen Holyday (Vice Chair, Public Works and Infrastructure committee)

Councillor Christin Carmichael Greb

Councillor Chin Lee

Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti

Councillor Anthony Perruzza

Dear Mayor Tory:

We are a group of physicians who live and work in the City of Toronto. We urge you to make the Bloor bike lanes permanent, and to extend the lanes east and west.





# Advocacy Toolkit

## Step 5: Implement and Evaluate

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How will you measure success?</li><li>• What are your intended outputs?</li><li>• Evaluate strategies, messaging, partnerships</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Success characterized by vote at Infrastructure &amp; Environment Committee and then City Council to make the Bloor bike lanes permanent</li></ul> |
|--|--|

GTA

# Toronto council votes to make the Bloor St. bike lanes permanent

Following a year-long pilot project and decades of advocacy by the city's cycling community, council backs separated lanes between Shaw St. and Avenue Rd.



By **Ben Spurr** Transportation Reporter

🔥 Tue., Nov. 7, 2017 | ⌚ 4 min. read



READ THE CONVERSATION





# City Council makes seven ActiveTO cycling network routes permanent, endorses a plan for 100 kilometres of new cycling routes

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News Release

December 16, 2021

Today, City Council approved two reports that ensure safe, separated and connected cycling corridors remain in place on a permanent basis across Toronto, as part of ActiveTO, and that 100 kilometres of new cycling routes are planned and designed for installation over the next three years.

Bikeway installation over the past three years has been unprecedented in Toronto. From 2019 to 2021, including ActiveTO routes, 65 kilometres of new bikeways have been installed, as well as 47 kilometres of upgrades and enhancements to existing cycling routes. The approved Cycling Network Plan Update report calls for plans to exceed this growth and add 100 kilometres of bike routes over the next three years (2022 to 2024).

Seven ActiveTO routes, which were first installed in 2020 as a temporary part of the City of Toronto's COVID-19 pandemic response, have been made permanent. The seven ActiveTO Cycling Network Expansion routes that will immediately be made permanent are:



# Small Groups

- Is there a particular advocacy issue you've been engaged with, or thinking of engaging with?
- How can you apply this advocacy model/toolkit to dive deeper into advocacy?

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# Introduction to Organizing

## 3 Organizing Questions

1. Who are my people?
2. What is the change we need?
3. How can they turn their resources into the power they need?

## 3 Outcomes of Successful Organizing

1. Reaching a clear and concise goal (society)
2. Increasing organizational capacity (organization)
3. Facilitates learning (individual)

## 3 organizing concepts

1. Shared story (public narrative)
2. Relational commitment
3. Distributed leadership and shared responsibility

## **Creating a shared story (public narrative)**

“...public narrative is composed of three elements: a story of self, a story of us, and a story of now. A story of self communicates who I am – my values, my experience, why I do what I do. A story of us communicates who we are – our shared values, our shared experience, and why we do what we do. And a story of now transforms the present into a moment of challenge, hope, and choice.”

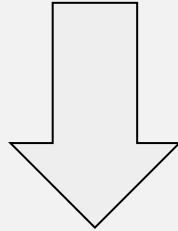
-Marshall Ganz

## Creating a shared story (public narrative)

- Story of self = call to leadership
- Story of us = shared values & shared experiences
- Story of now = strategy & action

# Relational Commitment

action inhibitors: inertia, apathy, fear, isolation, self-doubt



Stories, relationship-building  
Trust, commitment

action motivators: urgency, anger, hope, solidarity, you-can-make-a-difference



# Relational Commitment

- How to do this?
  - one-to-one meetings “the one-to-one”
  - potlucks and parties
  - group meetings
  - group actions

# Distributed leadership & shared responsibility

Leadership is ... accepting responsibility  
for enabling others  
to achieve shared purpose  
in the face of uncertainty.

# Small Groups

What has worked in your organizing practice?

How could you bring in these new ideas to your organizing?



# Thank you! Any questions?

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@SamanthaGreenTO

