Creative Climate Advocacy
Health professional leadership in the era of the climate crisis

GREENHEALTH ACADEMY
MARCH 12, 2020
Welcome and Introduction

• Emergency medicine physician
• Senior Clinical Advisor for Physician Engagement for Health Care Without Harm
  
• acollins@hcwh.org
• @DrAmy_Collins
Creative Climate Advocacy

- American Public Health Association
- Climate Nexus
Webinar agenda and logistics

• Jim Recht
• Helena Clements
• Katie Huffling
• Q&A
• Wrap up

• Questions and comments can be sent to the speakers through the chat or question function
• This webinar will be recorded and archived for those that aren’t able to join us today
The health professional as an advocate

“Advocate for social, economic, educational and political changes that ameliorate suffering and contribute to human well-being.” (American Medical Association Declaration of Professional Responsibility, 2017)
Why climate advocacy?
• Climate changes health
• Extreme weather events can impact health care delivery and access
• The health care sector contributes to climate change
• Health professionals are trusted and can be powerful advocates for climate solutions
Why health professionals?

Lancet Countdown policy brief for the U.S., 2018

Gallup, 2018
How can health professionals take action? (traditional advocacy)

- Health sector
- Public policy
- State clinician climate action groups
- Media
- Research
- Education
- Clinical practice
- Individual action
Climate health emergency

Climate Change is a Health Emergency

U.S. CALL TO ACTION ON CLIMATE, HEALTH, AND EQUITY: A POLICY ACTION AGENDA

2019

https://climatehealthaction.org
Climate strikes

Fire Drill Fridays

https://firedrillfridays.com
Climate train talks

Isobel Braithwaite
@izzybraithwaite

First #ClimateEmergency= #HealthEmergency train talk, following Helena Clements & @JackMiln's lead - thank you @Dr_Chloe_Hope & Dr Shuo Zhang (@vesicle) for doing it with me!

Our ask: vote for the #climate & the #NHS on Dec 12th!
Doctors for Extinction Rebellion

A doctors collective who, appreciating that climate change is an impending public health catastrophe, have decided to undertake civil disobedience with Extinction Rebellion

https://www.doctorsforxr.com
A call to action to health professionals worldwide to engage in nonviolent, social protest to demand solutions to protect patients from the climate crisis

-October 2019

“All health professionals have a duty and obligation to engage in all kinds of non-violent social protest to address the climate emergency... that is the duty of a doctor.”

Dr. Richard Horton
Editor in chief, The Lancet

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2x6sBfV64N4&feature=youtu.be
Health professional civil disobedience

“Carefully planned, thoughtful civil disobedience does fall within the realm of health professional climate advocacy” – The Lancet Viewpoint; Jan. 2020

https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)32985-X/fulltext
Investing in humanity: The BMJ’s divestment campaign

"Health professionals and medical organizations should not accept the world as it is. Taking action is a duty to the people we serve and to future generations.”

"Divestment offers us an opportunity to end despair and disempowerment, to begin to reclaim our world from misguided political and commercial agendas. By divesting now we wish to restore hope for the future wellbeing of our planet and for human health.”

– The British Medical Journal 2020

https://www.bmj.com/content/368/bmj.m167
Dr. Jim Recht

- Assistant Professor of Psychiatry Part-Time, Harvard Medical School
- Adjunct Clinical Asst. Prof. Psychiatry, Tufts University School of Medicine
- Staff Psychiatrist, Cambridge Health Alliance
- Clinical Consultant, Massachusetts General Hospital
Climate Crisis/Health Crisis
Climate Code Team

Jim Recht, MD
Staff Psychiatrist, CHA; Clinical Consultant, MGH
Clinical Assistant Professor, Harvard Medical School
Climate Code Team

a. Why traditional advocacy isn’t enough
b. Inspiration for forming group
c. Support from Climate Disobedience Center
d. Principles of group
e. Tips for starting a local group
Climate Code Team

a. Why traditional advocacy isn’t enough
The Equity Gap

- Harm + *injustice*
- A vicious cycle:
  - Climate change harms communities *unequally*
  - Disadvantaged groups hit *worse* *disproportionately*
  - Groups worst hit are placed at *further* *disadvantage*
The Empathy Gap

- Our patients in communities of urban poverty

Alana: 29-year-old w/Schizophrenia +

- Comorbid asthma
- Limited support, Financial stressors
- Anxiety, paranoia
Fossil Fuel Divestment

Poor communities/communities of color:

- Degraded housing and utilities
- Air pollution, environmental waste
- Heat islands, flood risks
Climate Code Team

b. Inspiration for forming group
Benjamin Spock's Baby and Child Care one of the best-selling books of all time, overall sales > 50 million

"Trust yourself. You know more than you think you do."
One of the first public figures to march in antiwar demonstration with Martin Luther King

1968 he was indicted for violation of the Selective Service Act =
2 year prison sentence and $50,000 fine
Climate Code Team

c. Support from Climate Disobedience Center
The Climate Disobedience Center exists to support a growing community of climate dissidents who take the risk of acting commensurate with the scale and urgency of the crisis.

**FEATURED POST**

**Coal Resupply Train Blockaded in Two States**

POSTED BY JAY O'HARA · DECEMBER 11, 2019 1:12 PM

This weekend across two states, a community of climate activists stopped 10,000 tons of...
The Climate Disobedience Center exists to get your back

- Flexible services aimed at supporting new organizers.
- Want to do civil disobedience but aren’t sure where or how to start?

We facilitate trainings that help you pull off a successful campaign.

http://www.climatedisobedience.org
Climate Code Team

d. Principles of group
Climate Code Team

Mission Statement Excerpts

- We prioritize *relationships* to sustain us now and as the crisis deepens.
- We use the traditional trust granted to physicians to address the climate crisis with urgency.
- We understand that addressing the climate crisis requires a disruption of the status quo and established interests.
- We amplify the voices of children, people who are most affected by the climate crisis.
- We support individuals and communities people who, as a consequence of their oppressed or less privileged status, assume greater risk in being climate advocates.
- Our actions invoke moral clarity at the point of harm and highlight the connection between human health and the climate crisis.
Climate Code Team

★ We prioritize justice and equity.
★ We unmask the violence of the status quo.
★ We act for people, other species, wild places and the web of life.
★ We engage in a manner that maintains professional credibility.
★ We focus on moral imagination rather than political feasibility.
Fossil Fuel Divestment

Avoiding Catastrophe (IPCC report):

- Rapid Phase Out of Fossil Fuels
- Promote socially just forms of energy, agriculture and building
Fossil Fuel Divestment

Fossil fuel industry:

- Millions in lobbying for billions in subsidies
- Anti-science pseudoscience
Fossil Fuel Divestment

Fossil fuel divestment:

● Stop the Immoral Bet

● End the industry’s political dominance

● Reinvest sustainably for social justice
e. Tips for starting a local group
Climate Code Team

a. Why traditional advocacy isn’t enough
b. Inspiration for forming group
c. Support from Civil Disobedience Center
d. Principles of group
e. Tips for starting a local group
Dr. Helena Clements

• Consultant General Pediatrician
  Sherwood Forest Hospitals
  Trust

• Clinical Chair of the Women
  and Children’s Division
Climate Crisis = Health Crisis

Dr Helena Clements
Consultant Paediatrician
Chair Women and Children Division
Who am I?

- Paediatrician in NHS for 30+ years
- Consultant 20 years
- Medical manager 12 years
- Wife
- Mother
- Grandmother
- Citizen
Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Trust
Hockerton Housing Project
hockertonhousingproject.org.uk
My career in a slide

• Graduated 1988 – Nottingham
• Initial house jobs and early paediatric training
• 2 ½ years in Namibia (voluntary service overseas VSO) *
• Complete paediatric training
• Consultant position 19 years
• The epiphany **
The epiphany 2019

• Eco activist = Doctor
• Climate crisis = Health Crisis

• Result!
• Call to action
• Drs for XR / Health Declares..
Train Talks – My response to Climate Crisis
Train talks idea

• My husband’s idea
• Noticed commuter train full of people sitting in silence (with devices)
• Opportunity to break the silence!
• ...about climate change.
Choose your moment.....

• Hello! My name is..
• I am a paediatrician, mother, grandmother..
• ..my duty as a doctor..
• Climate crisis is health crisis..
• We can all do...think about... talk about..
• By travelling by train....low carbon option. ..😊
• Thank you for listening
Train-talks tips

• Be authentic - talk about what you know
• Be passionate
• Minimise data
• Keep to less than 2 minutes
• Record and tweet (friend or stranger)
Public responses

• Usually round of applause at end
• Some smile and encourage
• Some avoid eye contact – embarrassed?
• Twitter – 70,000+ shares
• Facebook
• Recognised at work
Train talks are now a thing!

• Embraced by Drs for XR
• Very active before general election (but careful not to be party political)
• You can even attend a train-talks workshop

• Alternative options
  – “does anyone want to talk about climate change?”
  – Just talk to the person next to you
Health Declares Climate Emergency
Health Declares (a climate emergency)

• Doctors and other health professionals
• Network across the UK
• Actions within NHS
  – Divestment of medical colleges
  – Education- local meetings /groups
  – Hospitals/ Colleges declare climate emergency
  – Climate action – individual, corporate, National
Drs for XR

• More political
• Health related actions, disobedience, protest
• Outreach
• Media
• Part of the Rebellion (next April 2020)
• Making international links
• COP26 Glasgow Nov 2020
Rebellion shifts

• Donate income from locum shifts
• Fund raising for XR
• Raise awareness
Health March- October Rebellion
Professor Peter Cole
Future actions

• New job - Director for Climate Action
• On-going train talks
• Providing opportunities to connect with low carbon living
• Considering other opportunities to talk-
• Use relative seniority to influence politicians locally and nationally
So....... 

• We can be powerful advocates 
• We can use our voices 
• We are trusted 
• Climate Advocacy is more important than the day job!

• Thank you
Dr. Clements in action: first train talk!
Katie Huffling MS, RN, CNM, FAAN

- Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments executive director
- Certified nurse-midwife
Fire Drill Fridays

Katie Huffling, MS, RN, CNM, FAAN
Executive Director
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
OUR HOUSE IS ON FIRE.
JOIN US IN THE STREETS.

TAKE ACTION

https://firedrillfridays.com/
Arm in Arm
Thank you!

Katie Huffling
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
240-753-3729
katie@enviRN.org
Questions, Answers and Discussion
Health Care Without Harm Physician Network

A network of physicians interested in reducing the environmental impact of health care delivery and advocating for climate-smart health care and other climate solutions

https://noharm.org/physiciannetwork
Medical Students for a Sustainable Future (MS4SF)

“As future doctors, we recognize the urgency of addressing climate change and the critical need for action.”

https://noharm-uscanada.org/MS4SF
Nurses Climate Challenge

A national campaign to mobilize nurses to educate 50,000 health professionals on the impacts of climate change on human health and opportunities for climate-smart health care

https://nursesclimatechallenge.org
Thank you!

Any questions or comments please contact me at acollins@hcwh.org

@DrAmy_Collins

https://noharm.org