

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

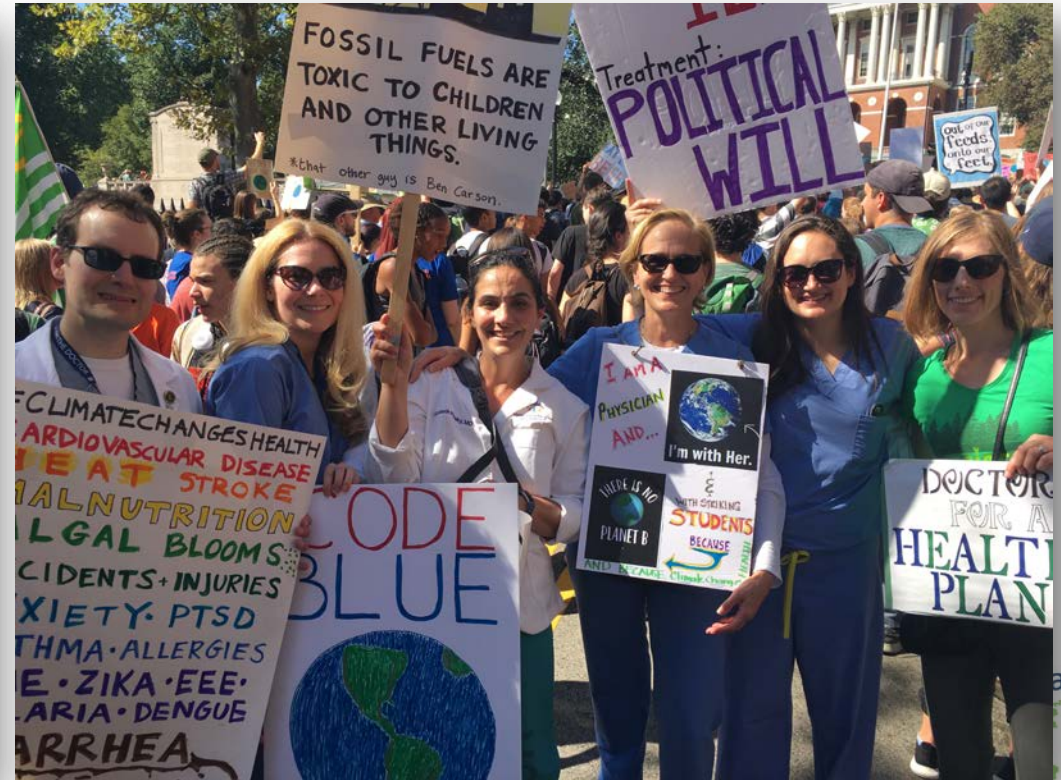
- Jim Recht
- Helena Clements
- Katie Huffling
- Q&A
- Wrap up
- Questions and comments can be sent to the speakers through the chat or question function
- This webinar will be recorded and archived for those that aren't able to join us today

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)



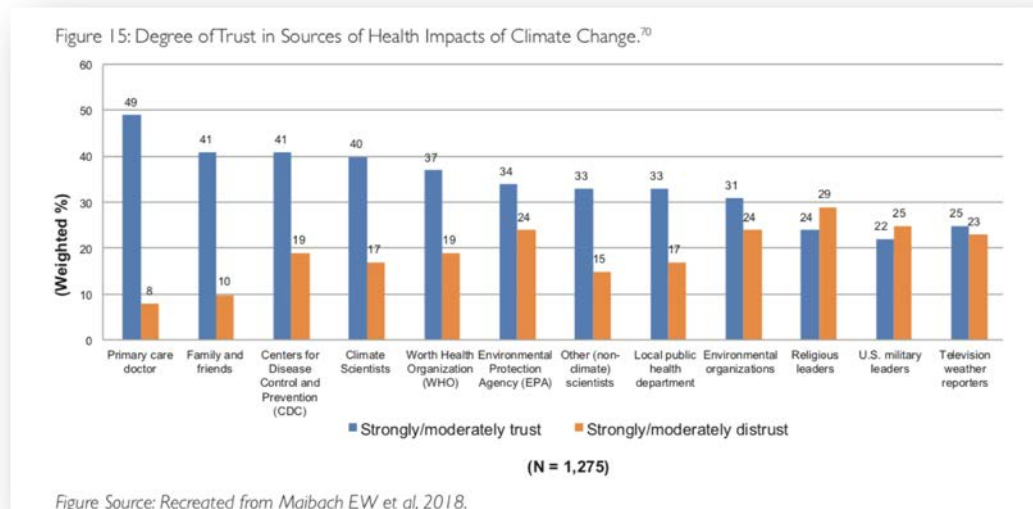
Why climate advocacy?



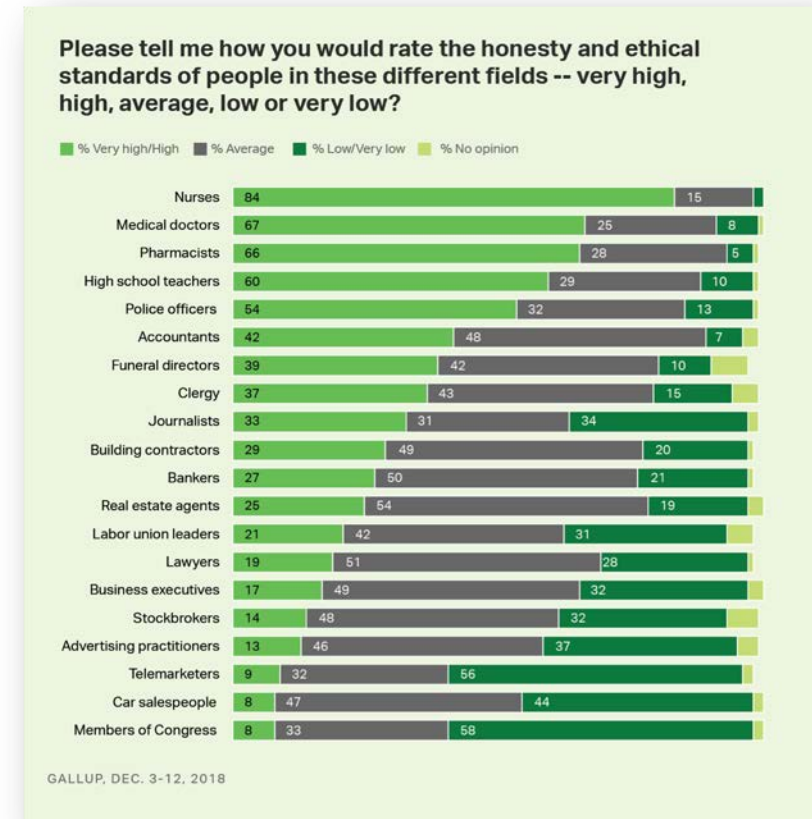
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- Climate changes health
 - Extreme weather events can impact health care delivery and access
 - The health care sector contributes to climate change
 - Health professionals are trusted and can be powerful advocates for climate solutions



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



Amy Collins @DrAmy_Collins · Dec 12, 2019

Such an honor to join [@MarjorieDecker](#) & [@PinskyElizabeth](#) on this all women panel about climate, health, health care & opportunities for health professionals to get to work & take action to address the biggest public health threat of our time. [#ClimateChangesHealth](#) [@HCWithoutHarm](#)



Climate health emergency



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

2019


<https://climatehealthaction.org>



Climate strikes



<https://noharm-uscanada.org/articles/news/us-canada/health-and-medical-professionals-support-youth-climate-strikes>



December 6, 2019

Dear Teachers,

Please excuse your students from regularly scheduled school activities for the [Global Climate Strikes](#). Their absence is necessary because of the climate crisis.

As health and medical professionals, we know climate change is a global health emergency that is already causing widespread harm to people's health and well-being.

In fact, it's likely this won't be the first or last time your students miss school due to climate change. Asthma is [the most common reason](#) for school absences, and climate change is linked to several [well-known asthma triggers](#), including extreme heat, air pollution, allergies, and mold. Your students' mental health is also at risk, as climate-related natural disasters have been found to [cause PTSD in children](#), and [general anxiety about climate change is increasing](#) among young people.

These are only a few of the many ways the climate crisis is jeopardizing young people's ability to grow into healthy adults and reach their full intellectual and creative potential.


Students around the world are asserting their right to inherit a livable planet, and we stand with them in this fight.

We thank the striking students for their leadership and recommend they continue to call for immediate climate solutions to protect their health and future. Striking for climate action is a medically recommended activity to gain the attention of decision-makers, and results will improve with the support of adult allies.

Your students may return to school when the climate strike is over. However, if meaningful action isn't taken soon, we excuse your students to strike again on another Friday in the near future.

Sincerely,

The undersigned health and medical professionals ([list of signatories here](#))





Fire Drill Fridays



<https://firedrillfridays.com>



<http://www.climatedisobedience.org>



Climate train talks



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

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



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2x6sBfV64N4&feature=youtu.be>

Health professional civil disobedience

Should health professionals participate in civil disobedience in response to the climate change health emergency?

“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](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)32985-X/fulltext)



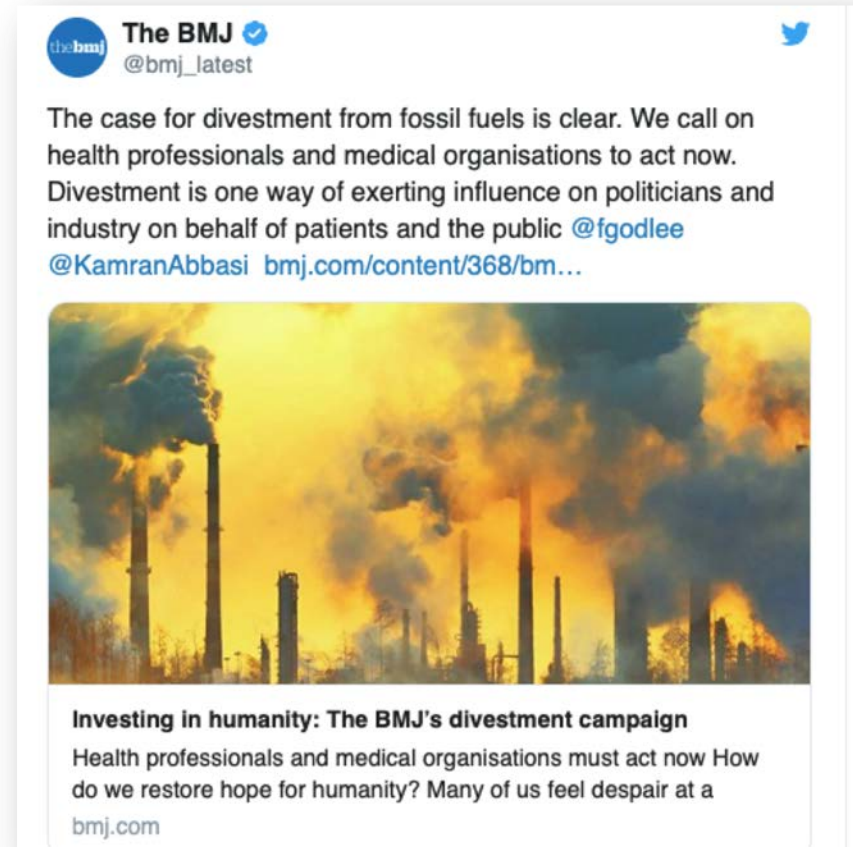
Investing in humanity: The BMJ's divestment campaign

"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



Our Work

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

From climatedisobedience.org/services

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
-

Climate Code Team

- e. Tips for starting a local group

Climate Code Team

- a. Why traditional advocacy isn't enough
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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/>









REPRESENTATIVE
Lauren Underwood
Illinois

1118





GREENPEACE





| 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)

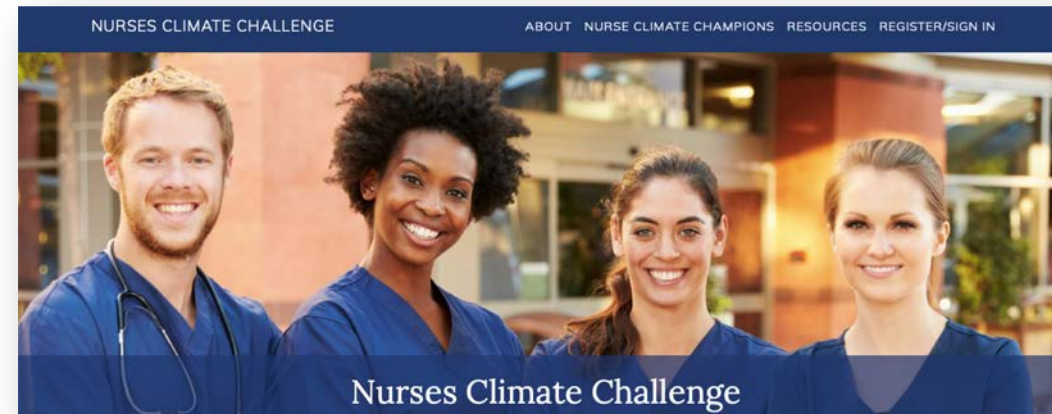


<https://noharm-uscanada.org/MS4SF>

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>



Alliance of Nurses for
Healthy Environments



Thank you!

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

 @DrAmy_Collins

<https://noharm.org>

