



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health workers to cycle from Seattle to Olympia to deliver prescription to Governor and WA legislators for urgent action on climate

Seattle, WA—January 24, 2022 — Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility today announced plans for health workers to cycle from Seattle to Olympia, WA on Friday, Jan 28, to deliver a “Climate Prescription” addressed to Governor Jay Inslee and Washington legislators, along with a petition signed by hundreds of WA health professionals, calling for urgent action on the climate crisis.

“Climate health is Public Health, and more urgent action is needed, not just what is politically feasible” Dr. Annemarie Dooley, nephrologist and board member at Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, said. “Health professionals are witnessing the impacts of climate change on patients in our hospitals and clinics already, and it is getting worse as the climate warms. If we don’t wean ourselves off fossil fuels, the health consequences of climate change will make the impacts of the COVID pandemic look small in comparison.”

The Washington State Medical Association has passed a resolution calling climate change a critical public health issue, and stating that “the warming planet threatens us all, but our most vulnerable – children, the elderly, the poor, and those with chronic health conditions – are already suffering from and will feel the brunt of health impacts if climate change increases.” The resolution calls for “policies that both reduce pollution and address the causes of climate change and that will create healthier, sustainable communities.”

National organizations including the American Medical Association, the American Public Health Association, the American Lung Association, and others have declared the climate crisis a public health emergency. Dr. Mark Vossler, cardiologist and President of Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility said, “The scientific and medical consensus is overwhelming. Climate change is real, it’s caused by humans burning fossil fuels, and it’s having real health impacts on people in Washington and throughout the world. The longer we take to act the more people will suffer.”

Right now, myriad bills are before the WA Legislature that would simultaneously address the causes of climate change in our state, and the associated health threats that they pose, while helping WA meet its statutory climate goals. This includes must-pass legislation that would improve building and energy codes, promote electrification, support the transition to clean fuels and transportation, limit sprawl, and more.

“When you can’t breathe, nothing else matters,” said Dr. Chris Covert-Bowlds, board member of Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility and Vice President of Health Care for All WA. “Just like a person with a bad asthma attack needs a shot of adrenaline, our climate action efforts need a shot of adrenaline to help us all breathe easier.”



To underscore the urgency of climate action at the state level, health workers plan to cycle from Seattle to Olympia on Friday, January 28 to deliver a “climate prescription” and petition to Governor Jay Inslee on the Capitol steps at approximately 4:00 pm.

About Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility

Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility (WPSR) is a healthcare professional-led advocacy organization working to create a healthy, just, peaceful and sustainable world. We leverage the voice of healthcare professionals from all backgrounds and their supporters and those passionate about our work to educate the public, influence decision-makers, and promote policies in government and the private sector that support our mission. More information at: <https://www.wpsr.org>

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