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Rally Toolkit

Hosting a rally in your community is a great way to bring attention to the continued crisis our physicians and the entire health care system are facing. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to be mindful about hosting in-person events with large amounts of people that would violate [Alberta’s COVID-19 guidelines](#). There are multiple options on how to safely host a rally in your own community. This document is meant to guide you through the planning process and offer different recommendations and options. In the end, you know your community best and what will work for it.

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Organizing your Rally

Collaborating with Other Physicians

The government’s imposed cuts to the physician funding framework have impacted physicians from a lot of different practice areas. Reach out to physicians from different specialties to collaborate with you and get involved. With the government trying to divide physicians, this sends a strong message to them and the public that we are united, working together, and will not be divided.

Collaborating with Community

One of the things that makes rallies so effective is that they are typically community-driven. Everyone in attendance is there supporting something that they care about and want to raise awareness about it.

Before you get too deep into the planning process, reach out to your community leaders and prominent members of the community. Engage them in the planning and overall cause. If they are already seeing significant changes to health care, they may want to get involved to shine a light on the issue. If you live in a larger city like Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer or Lethbridge, there is a wonderful opportunity to host multiple events in the different parts of city, so they still have the community feel rather than one large rally downtown.

If your local mayor or council are not supportive of the rally, you can connect with other prominent community members for their support, including local business owners, community-led organizations, patient groups or those with whom you have personal relationships. You can also reach out to the [Alberta Urban Municipalities Association](#) and/or the [Rural Municipalities of Alberta](#) for their support and assistance.

Some community members may even take the lead on planning the rally or ask to help because they are concerned about a potential shortage of physicians. Encourage their support and involvement as having a team to help you can make a huge difference and take a huge load off of your shoulders.

Date, Time and Location

Prior to selecting the date and time for your rally, make sure there are no other competing events in your community that might impact attendance. Make sure the location is one that people are familiar with and is easy to get to. A location where people have to climb a hill or stairs will deter seniors or those with physical disabilities from attending.

Rally to Rescue Health Care Facebook Page

Even if you haven’t yet decided if you want to host your own rally, consider joining the [Rally to Rescue Health Care](#) Facebook page. It is a forum to share details on the different rallies happening across the province and a way for you to lend your support. Page members are also using it as a space to share

resources, information, tips and other helpful advice. You can also view the June 30th Pincher Creek Rally on the page.

Rally Options

The optics of a group of physicians hosting a rally with lots of people in the midst of a pandemic might not be good. During planning, be mindful of public health guidelines and what would happen if your event leads to an outbreak.

Socially Distanced Rallies

Consider alternatives to in-person gatherings that allow people to maintain adequate social distancing.

A drive-in event could include hosting the rally in a large parking lot where people are parked a safe distance apart and stay in their vehicle while using a sound system so everyone can hear the different speakers. A drive-thru rally would have people drive by a specific location at a predetermined time to show their support. A drive-by or parade rally could see the organizers drive by different areas of the community at a specified time to see supporters. In all instances, signs can amplify your messages and bring even more attention. Get creative with your ideas and materials.

Or, consider having a smaller scale rally that you can manage on your own, such as teaming up with a group of community members and stand in front of a central location (such as the hospital, a busy intersection, clinic office) with signs to garner attention and support.

Virtual Rallies

A virtual event can take place using your clinic's Facebook page for a Facebook Live event. Facebook Live lends well to having multiple speakers sharing their stories and concerns with people being able to comment or share their story using the chat feature. The recording can also be saved for people to watch at a later date. There are more details on hosting a Facebook Live event included later in this toolkit.

In-Person Rallies

If you are hosting an in-person event, make sure that you are following the [Government of Alberta's COVID-19 guidelines](#) and promoting adequate social distancing and wearing masks. You can also check with your local public health officials to make sure you are taking the appropriate precautions and seek their advice. Here are some things to consider:

- Have signage that promotes social distancing, wearing a mask and hand hygiene.
- Consider having hand sanitizer stations for people to easily keep their hands clean or hand out masks.
- Try to host your rally outside with lots of space for social distancing.
- While we do not recommend an indoor rally, if you do hold your rally indoors, make sure the venue is larger than what you need and public health guidelines for large gatherings are followed.
- Do your due diligence to have proper signage with public health guidelines and proper safety measures in place.

If an outbreak happens as a result of your event, it could erase all of the positive intent.

Consider if you need audio-visual supports such as microphones, speakers or a projector and screen. To encourage attendee questions and comments without having to physically take the stage, consider using a dedicated cell phone for people to text their thoughts or questions. It can be your clinic cell phone that you use for appointment reminders or one specifically for this event.

Notifying Community Officials

Depending on the scale of your event, you may want to reach out to public health official, police, fire department, and ambulance so they are aware of your event and can offer advice or recommendations and informing them about any potential consequences that may arise. You should also connect with your municipality to make sure you get any applicable permits and are abiding by their regulations.

Why Rally?

It's important to let your community know why you are holding the rally. Make sure any of your promotional materials or social media messages include information on why you are holding the rally and what that means for the community. They will be more inclined to participate if you can see how this impacts them, their family, or community.

Promoting the Rally

Ready Made Materials

Once you settle on a date, time, format and location for your rally, you'll want to start promoting it immediately. The Joint Task Force have created customizable poster templates for you to use to promote your event. They've also created a couple different logo options for the rallies to show their connection and make them identifiable across the province. They are available on the [Resource for Physicians webpage](#) (member login required).

Posters

If you are using posters to promote your event, post them in your clinic, other medical clinics around town, community bulletin boards, grocery stores and other high traffic areas where people will see them. Make sure you have permission to hang posters in any areas you choose. The graphic from the poster can also be shared on social media so others can share or print.

Facebook

An easy way to promote your rally is through a Facebook event, as that allows others to share it with their followers as well. It can be done through either your clinic's page or your community's page. It can also be shared on different community Facebook pages to increase awareness.

Other Promotion Options

You can create yard signs that you and your community members can display to show your support (make sure you are abiding by municipal signage bylaws). The event details can be posted on your clinic's social media or website and shared with your community's events pages (both social media and print

publications). You can also promote your rally through a radio interview, newspaper interview or word of mouth. You know your community best and what will work and how to reach people.

Make sure in your promotion that you include information on the different public health precautions you are taking and what you expect attendees to do.

Inviting Media



To gain even more attention for your event, personally invite media from your community to attend. Most media outlets have their contact information on their website to easily share details with them. They may choose to interview you ahead of time to find out more information on the rally, and/or contact you after the rally with follow-up questions.

Facebook Live

Facebook Live can be used to stream virtually to your audience. People can still get involved by asking questions to the speakers through the comments section at the bottom of the screen. You can also add in other speakers so they can speak during the rally. The live can be saved and kept on your timeline for people to watch after it is over.

Scheduling a Live Video

Live videos can only be scheduled using the Google Chrome web browser. To schedule a live video on your computer:

1. Click **What's on your mind?** at the top of your News Feed.
2. Click  then click  **Live Video**.
3. Click **Schedule a Live Video** in the top left.
4. Select the date and time of your live video. Live videos can only be scheduled one week in advance.
5. Select where you'd like to broadcast your live video (to your timeline, a Page you manage, or in a group).
6. Click **Select an Image** to add a photo to your live video announcement. If you do not add a photo, the default will be your cover photo.
7. Click **Schedule Live Video** in the bottom left.

When you schedule a live video broadcast, you automatically create two posts:

1. **An announcement post.** The details of your upcoming live broadcast are published to your profile, Page or group as soon as you schedule your live video.
2. **Your live video post.** At the scheduled date and time of your broadcast, a post containing your live video will automatically be published to your profile, Page or group.

Tips for Hosting a Facebook Live Event

Below are a few tips from Facebook for hosting a Facebook Live:

1. Go live with a strong internet connection
 - Ensure your broadcast is as clear, high-resolution, and stable as possible.
 - If you are shooting on a phone:

- Stream quality varies based on your connection speed. Go live when you have a strong connection (use Wi-Fi instead of your phone's cellular data whenever possible).
 - Use a tripod or steadicam for a more stable stream.
2. Engage with your audience
- We prioritize content that sparks conversations and meaningful interactions between real people. Videos that inspire friend-to-friend or person-to-person interactions tend to get more distribution. Actively responding to and moderating comments during your live broadcast can play an important role in fostering such conversations and interactions.
 - Some techniques to drive healthy engagement include:
 - Say hello to commenters by name and reply to their comments.
 - When possible, bring audience questions or comments into the broadcast itself by answering questions on-air.
 - Pin great comments to the top of the chat.
 - Going live from an event? Encourage event participants to engage with the audience via the live comments.
3. Tell people ahead of time when you're going to broadcast
- Build anticipation by letting people know when you'll be broadcasting live.

Live Resources

There are many more Facebook Live resources on [Facebook's website](#). They explain how to use live, different options available, and troubleshooting tips. Below are a couple additional links to information on using Facebook Live.

[How to start a Facebook Live video](#)

[Facebook Live Video: The Complete Guide to Live-Streaming for Business](#)

[How to use Facebook Live \(video\)](#)

Rally Format

The format for your rally depends on the type of rally you have chosen and if you are having people speak or not. If you are having speakers, have a couple physicians speak briefly, invite community leaders to speak, and open up the space for members of your community to lend their support, share their concerns and ask questions.

If you are not hosting a rally with speeches, you could instead have a conversation on social media. Share your concerns on pages in your community and ask community members to join the conversation. This is an opportunity for you to dispel myths and honestly tell them what health care in your community could look like in the future and how this may impact them directly.

Key Messages

It's important to keep your messaging focused so your attendees retain what you are trying to tell them. Pick three key messages that you will continue to use over and over again. Try to connect your key messages to patient care and what it means to them. Key messages are the core messages you want your attendees to hear and remember. They should resonate with your attendees and make them want to

take action. Speak from the heart and be honest with attendees. Share how you've been impacted, what it means for the public and what they can do to support you (direct them to www.patientsfirst.ca).

Three key messages that you could use include:

- being worried about the future of health care in your community
- concerns that Alberta Health has not explained where these doctors they promised are coming from
- encourage the government to get back to the table and reach an agreement with the AMA to ensure stability in Alberta

During the Rally

Roles During the Rally

Decide if you need people to fulfil any specific roles to assist the execution of your rally. Remember that the actual rally will be very busy and you will have a lot to do, and help from others will make it run so much smoother. Some of the potential roles include:

- Go To Person – someone to manage all of the different roles, respond to questions, respond to any issues, and know what is supposed to be happening at all times.
- Greeter – someone to monitor people as they arrive and remind them about the different public health guidelines and hand out masks.
- Emcee – someone to start and conclude the rally, introduce speakers and keeps you on time.
- Speakers – those pre-determined speakers that will be speaking during the rally.
- Question Monitor – someone that's responsible for monitoring the questions, either through text or chat on Facebook Live, and either sharing them with the emcee or the audience.
- Social Media Coordinator – someone responsible for the actual Facebook Live and broadcasting it to those watching from elsewhere. They can also respond to questions asked via chat.
- Parade Marshall – someone to lead the parade or drive-by where people can follow them through the route.

Schedule of Events

Make sure you have a schedule of events that all those involved with organizing your rally are aware of.

This can include:

- Prep time before rally
- Official start time
- Emcee speaks
- First Speaker
- Second Speaker
- Questions and comments from attendees
- Emcee wraps up

After the Rally

After the rally, consider having a debrief with the other organizers to debrief on the rally and discuss next steps to keep the momentum from your event going. You can also follow-up with attendees to thank them for attending and let them know about any next steps you are attending.

Lessons from Pincher Creek

Below are some feedback and recommendations from Dr. Samantha Myhr from Pincher Creek after hosting their rally.

Planning Team

Having a team to assist with planning makes a huge difference. There are a whole bunch of things to think about and a great team can help with this. For example, sign printing/distribution, parade permit, finding and communicating with volunteers, equipment, permission to use land, logistics for Facebook Live. They are invaluable with helping to get the word out to people in advance and sharing their social media expertise.

Community Support

The event generated a lot of media attention for the mayor, so it is important to have community backing. If they are not supportive of the rally, they may not appreciate the added attention. You need to recognize that this added attention may impact your relationship with community leadership moving forward.

Prior Communication

Share information ahead of time about why you are holding the rally and why this matters to members of the community. This will help to garner the communities support and understand why the rally is taking place.

Go To Person

Have a designated go to person that is not a physician. This role is a must and can respond to inquiries around the event and be a central person for people to contact.

Pincher Creek Links

[Pincher Creek Rally to Rescue Health Care](#)

[Pincher Creek Rally CBC Article](#)

[Pincher Creek Rally CTV Article](#)

Planning Support or Assistance

If you have any questions or need any support, please reach out to the Joint Task Force at savfamilypractice@albertadoctors.org and we would be happy to help.