



November 3, 2009


Gary Bloch MD CCFP, St. Michael's Hospital

Health Providers Against Poverty

HEALTH PROVIDER ACTION ON POVERTY – EXPERIENCES FROM THE FRONT LINES



Outline

- 1) The Special Diet Campaign and the emergence of Health Providers Against Poverty
 - 2) Current HPAP Activities & Rationale
 - 3) Challenges & Opportunities
- 

It all started with a
direct health intervention
into Poverty ...



And it evolved into ...

Lobbying Policymakers



Public awareness raising



Health Organizations



Alliances with Antipoverty Groups



Legal Challenges





The partners

- Health providers
- Antipoverty activists
- People living in poverty
- Health professional organizations
- Health provider organizations
- Toronto Public Health & Board of Health
- Other advocacy organizations



Lessons from the SD Campaign

1. Engage in action with real impact
2. Partner with people living in poverty
3. Think long-term
4. Diversify your activities

This matured into:

**HEALTH
PROVIDERS**

**AGAINST
POVERTY**

What HPAP is doing now:

1) Education

- Translating poverty into the language of Providers ... evidence, evidence, evidence
- Funding: DFCEM, CEP, SMH Foundation
- *Rationale:*
 - Change for people living in poverty
 - Building Capacity

2) Advocacy

- Government
 - Coalitions
- Professional Organizations
- *Rationale:*
 - Add health expertise to others' expertise
 - Systems-level change ... power in numbers

3) Research

- Systematic Reviews
 - Welfare changes and health
 - Primary care interventions
- Quantifying the effects of poverty
 - Welfare recipient study
- Bolstering education
 - Lit. Review; Qualitative; Impact Assessment
- Evaluating Interventions – the next frontier?
- *Rationale:*
 - The power of good evidence

4) Direct Action



- Special Diet Campaign
- Multidisciplinary anti-poverty clinics
- Individual provider tools/actions
- *Rationale:*
 - We can make real change for people living in poverty now
 - Basis for advocacy



Opportunities

- Health Provider energy and experience in antipoverty campaigns
- Funding available for research, education – translate to interventions???
- OMA



Challenges

- “This is not a Medical issue”
- Capacity
- Long-term perspective and commitment: requires dedication, volunteer time, passion
- Is the province talking big and acting little?

A vertical bar on the left side of the slide, consisting of a white top section with a barcode-like pattern, and a bottom section with a blue-to-white gradient background. The bottom section contains four colored rectangular segments: a small pink one at the top, a grey one, a yellow one, and a larger pink one at the bottom.

www.healthprovidersagainstopoverty.ca

gary.bloch@utoronto.ca