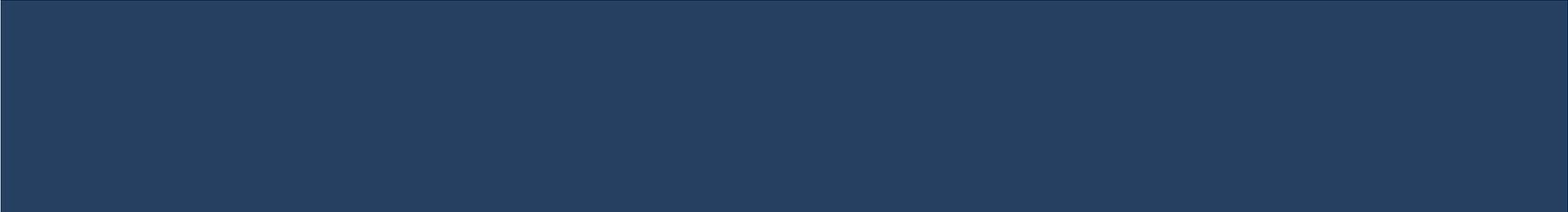


Politics and Public Health – friends or enemies?

By Emeritus Professor Geoff Gallop
CityHealth International 2018,
Odessa, 13 September 2018.



Public Health:

Addresses health at a population level; looks to social, economic and environmental determinants of health.

Politics:

Addresses the questions of power and influence in the community; who wins? Who loses?

The Scientist in us all...

- From research to recommendations to policy to implementation to evaluation.
- Politics = applied science.
- It's pure and it's simple!

The Realist in us all...

- Who sets the agenda? Who's at the table of power? Who can best influence the decision-makers?
- Politics = ideas, interests, opinion **AND** evidence.
- It's messy and it's complicated.

Why is evidence often avoided or dismissed?

- The fundamentalist problem.
- The risk averse politician
- A trust deficit
- The ivory tower temptation
- A communication problem
- Priorities at the time
- Feasibility issues
- Vested interest opposition

The Post-Truth Problem...

→ Science and evidence under attack; a world where opinion is fact.

The SEVEN WORDS White House doesn't like!

- Diversity
- Entitlement
- Vulnerable
- Fetus
- Transgender
- Science-based
- Evidence-based

The Politics of it all – (1)

Stand up for Science

Albert Einstein Memorial at
National Academy of Sciences:

“The right to search for truth
implies also a duty; one must
not conceal any part of what
one has recognised to be true:”

The Politics of it all – (2)

Advice from Tom Nichols – strive to be humbler, be more ecumenical and vary sources, be less cynical in the face of those who make claims against the evidence & be more discriminating and check sources carefully.

I read this as saying “be better researchers” / “don’t cut corners”

The Politics of it all – (3) New Partnerships with the People

- Promote new ways to consider complex problems, e.g. Citizens' Juries, Peoples' Assemblies.
- “Reason” plus “Evidence” plus “Deliberation” plus “mini-publics” together.