



**RESEARCH2REALITY**

Shining a light on research & innovation.

## **This Team's Looking Out for Everybody's Health**

An interview with **Laura Rosella**, Population Health Scientist, and researchers at the Rosella lab (Population Health Analytics Laboratory) University of Toronto

### **Laura Rosella, Population Health Scientist**

The Dalla Lana School of Public Health is the biggest school of public health in Canada. And the focus of the school is really about bringing together people that work in public health, health systems, health policy. There's a focus on disease prevention and health equity.

We use data and evidence to try and inform how we can keep people healthy and prevent disease before it actually starts.

### **Meghan O'Neill, Epidemiologist**

When we think about a population, we think about segments in that population who are the most disadvantaged. And what we do in our lab is we really care about that group of people, and we want to make their experiences in our healthcare system better. We want to make integration better for those people.

### **Emmalin Buajitti, Spatial Epidemiologist**

We've produced a series of reports summarizing the geographic distribution of mortality in Ontario, and it shows that there are actually massive, massive



disparities in premature mortality in Ontario and in Canada. We believe that that means that there's something fundamentally happening in those places that we're not reaching the people that live there to provide them with good healthcare and public health.

### **Kathy Kornas, Epidemiology Evaluator**

We're able to look at different what-if scenarios. Sometimes it's hard to communicate what the impact of certain decisions will be. So with these tools we're able to see, well if you make this decision, such as implementing active transportation infrastructure, what will be the impact on diabetes cases? How many diabetes cases can we prevent, and what will be the cost savings for that? When you can put a dollar value on these decisions, it becomes very impactful for people in municipal office or politicians.

### **Why is your work important?**

#### **Laura Rosella**

Our work is really critical in thinking about the sustainability of healthcare and our entire society. And the reason why is because we go upstream, and actually we talk about things that might be happening five years from now, but also ten and twenty years from now. And the work that we're doing in developing tools to help people do planning more easily, to estimate the economic impacts of those prevention approaches, is really going to pay itself back, both in terms of the health of the population, which has always been our focus, but also the sustainability of our healthcare system.

