



MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

CRUSH COVID Returns to Raise Vital Funds for Mental Health in East Toronto

Toronto (February 10, 2021) –

Michael Garron Hospital and Toronto Hustle are partnering for a second year to give cyclists and communities around the world an opportunity to help CRUSH COVID. This year's event is focused on the growing mental health toll of the pandemic and the role communities can play in tackling it.

The inaugural CRUSH COVID event in 2020 took place shortly after the pandemic began affecting daily life in Toronto and raised an incredible \$250,000 for Michael Garron Hospital's Emergency Response Fund. The 24-hour virtual cycling marathon drew support from across Canada and internationally, helping to capture the collective spirit of cycling communities everywhere and their ability to come together even under the most challenging conditions.

In 2021, CRUSH COVID: Ride for Mind is highlighting the pandemic's growing mental health impact and the transformative power of communities finding new ways to connect and inspire action during the pandemic. The ride takes place one year to the day from Toronto entering its first lockdown.

The organizers are drawing particular attention to how the pandemic has disproportionately affected vulnerable populations – especially racialized communities, youth, and those living in poverty. The above average rates of COVID-19 infection in these communities have only compounded the deep existing disparities in mental health outcomes for vulnerable groups.

The funds being raised from the event will go to Michael Garron Hospital which provides care to more low-income and racialized individuals and families than any other hospital in the central Toronto region.

"Last year's CRUSH COVID event exemplified the extraordinary compassion and generous spirit of the cycling community," says **Mitze Mourinho, President, Michael Garron Hospital Foundation**. "We can't wait to welcome cyclists from across Toronto and around the world back to this unique virtual event to help address the mental health crisis that has emerged from the

pandemic, particularly for the most vulnerable among us. We're so grateful to every cyclist gearing up to join us."

"The mental health and addiction crises in our communities have only deepened during the pandemic. CRUSH COVID: Ride for Mind is a way for us to come together virtually and shine a light on these issues, and tackle them at the place and scale with the deepest impact, right here in the community," said **Brad Bradford, Toronto City Councillor for Beaches-East York.**

Bradford added, "I'll be riding for 24-hours again and am encouraging everyone to participate however they can, whether that's riding all or part of the 24-hours, donating, or simply spreading the word. In 2020, I got through the ride inspired by the incredible sacrifices our frontline workers made in the face of incredible uncertainty. Those sacrifices continue in 2021 and we all have new motivation knowing the toll the pandemic has taken on the mental health and well-being of our communities."

Cyclists of all abilities are invited to participate and help raise funds for Michael Garron Hospital's mental health programs, which provide compassionate inpatient and outpatient care to nearly 10,000 community members each year.

-30-

About the event

CRUSH COVID is a 24-hour virtual cycling event organized in partnership with the Toronto Hustle cycling team and Toronto City Councillor Brad Bradford.

- WHAT: CRUSH COVID: Ride for Mind in support of Michael Garron Hospital
- WHO: Brad Bradford, Toronto City Councillor for Beaches-East York and fellow cyclists Sarah Downey, President and CEO, Michael Garron Hospital
- WHEN: Friday, March 12, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. EST to Saturday, March 13, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. EST
- HOW: You can help CRUSH COVID by:
- Making a donation at www.crushcovid.ca
 - Riding all or part of the 24 Hour Zwift Cycling Marathon as an individual or as a relay team. To participate visit: www.crushcovid.ca
 - Join the livestream with Toronto City Councillor for Beaches-East York, Brad Bradford, riding for 24 hours solo at: www.facebook.com/BradMBradford

About Michael Garron Hospital

Nestled in the heart of East Toronto, Michael Garron Hospital (MGH), Toronto East Health Network, is a vibrant community teaching hospital serving more than 400,000 people in 22 distinct neighbourhoods. For more than 90 years, MGH has delivered high-quality, patient-centred healthcare services to families along the continuum of care, from welcoming a new life to facing end-of-life. MGH has continually renewed its commitment to community by adapting its programs and services to meet the evolving needs of the diverse population it serves. MGH is a respected full-service hospital with strong community and research partners, including the University of Toronto.

About Michael Garron Hospital Foundation

Michael Garron Hospital Foundation raises funds and engages our community in support of our hospital. A donation to Michael Garron Hospital is an investment in the prosperity of each and every person living in East Toronto. When members of our community are healthy, they are able to reach their full potential and better contribute to their family, neighbourhood, and ultimately, Canadian society.

About Toronto Hustle

Toronto Hustle is reshaping the way professional cycling is developed, delivered and sustained through grassroots community building. With a focus on developing Canada's next generation of cycling talent, pushing for safer streets, getting more people on bikes and growing the women's cycling community, Toronto Hustle has made a significant impact in the cycling community on and off the bike.

Contacts for further information:

Abigail Brown

Director, Marketing and Communications
Michael Garron Hospital Foundation
416-574-1750
abigail.brown@tehn.ca

Rishab Mehan

Chief of Staff, Councillor Brad Bradford
647-667-4920
rishab.mehan2@toronto.ca

Grahame Rivers

Communications, Toronto Hustle
647-299-9910
grahame.rivers@gmail.com

Follow Michael Garron Hospital Foundation and Toronto Hustle on social for updates!

Instagram:

[@MGHFoundation](#)

[@Toronto_Hustle](#)

Twitter:

[@MGHFoundation](#)

[@Toronto_Hustle](#)

Facebook:

[facebook.com/MGHFoundation](#)

[facebook.com/torontohustleCS](#)

Strava:

[https://www.strava.com/clubs/torontohustle](#)

Web:

[https://www.mghf.ca/](#)

[https://www.toronto-hustle.com/](#)