

# Making Science Work for Social Justice

A community workshop by Western Mass Science for the People

March 28, 2020



# Making Science Work for Social Justice

Introductions (~10 min)

Solidarity Science: Overview of Concepts (~15 min)

Case Study: Mold, Health, and Justice (~20 min)

Breakout Groups (~30 min)

Reconvene: Reports Back (~40 min)

Closing: Solidarity Science and COVID-19 (~15 min)

# Solidarity Science: An Overview of Key Concepts

- Situated Knowledge
- Strong Objectivity

Concepts advanced by feminist philosophers of science Donna Haraway and Sandra Harding, told through selections from Sophie Wang's comic "Science Under the Scope" (published on <http://freerads.org>)

- Everyone has expertise based on their experience. People with different social experiences have different forms of expertise (“situated knowledge”).

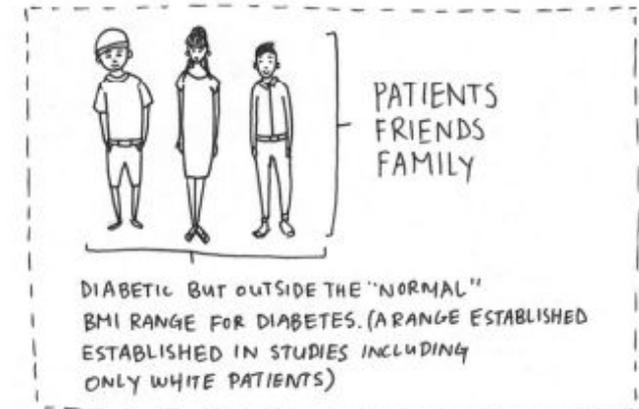
A RESEARCHER WHO IS NOT PART OF THIS COMMUNITY WOULDN'T BE SITUATED IN A POSITION TO SEE THAT PATTERN, AND THEREFORE WOULDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT QUESTION COULD BE ASKED!



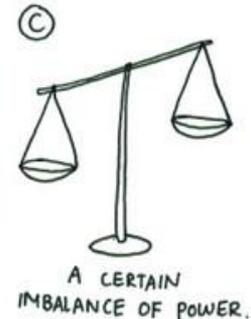
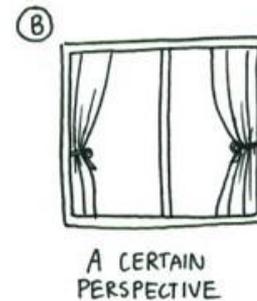
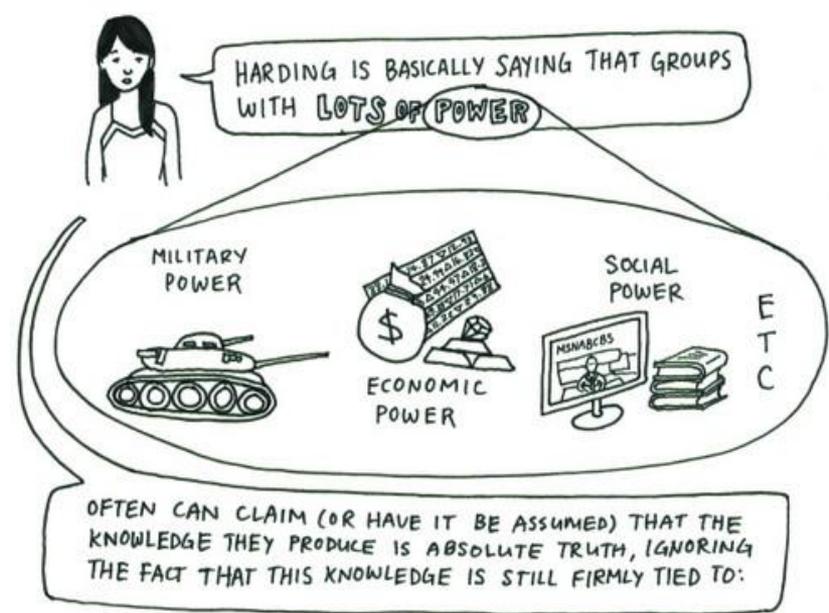
MAY ASK A RESEARCH QUESTION



BASED ON THEIR EXPERIENCE AS PART OF THAT COMMUNITY.

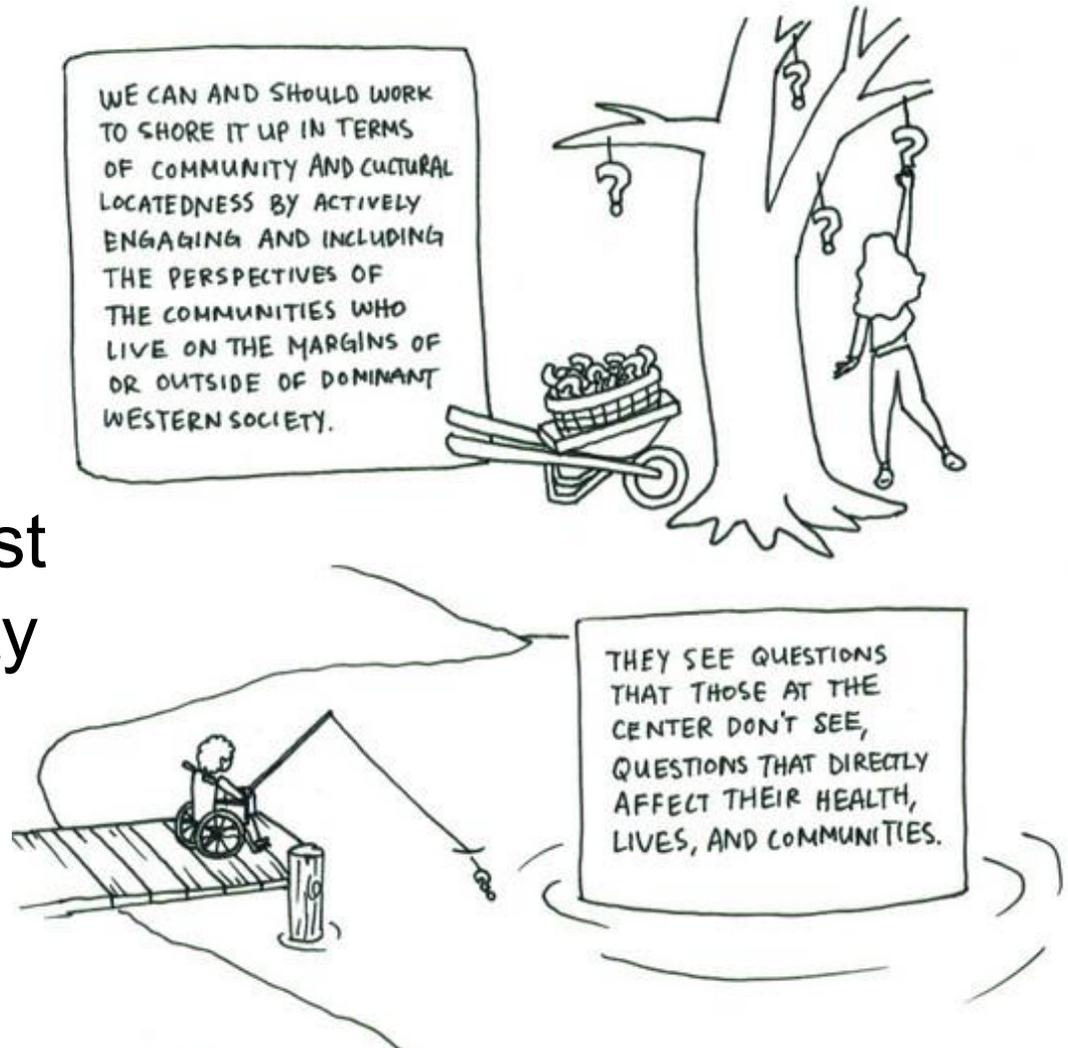


- People with less power in society are often assumed to be without relevant knowledge.
- Those with power are often seen as those with the most expertise.

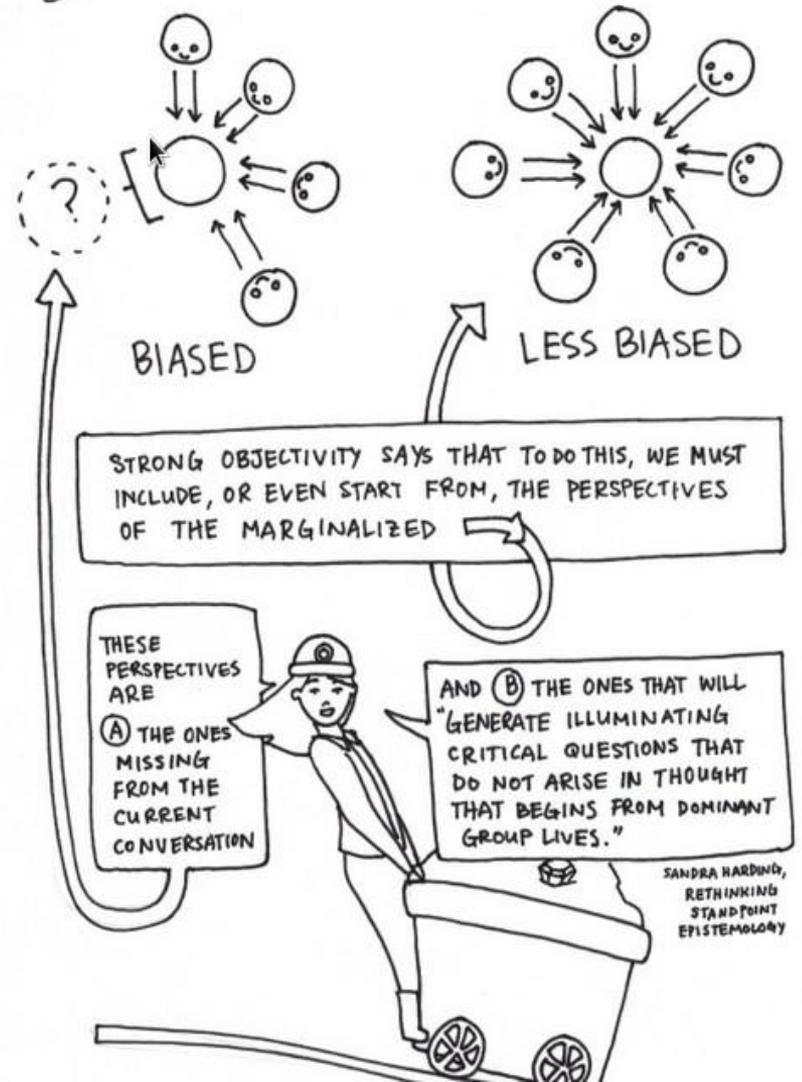


AND THEY GET AWAY WITH IT, BECAUSE OF THAT AFOREMENTIONED LOTS OF POWER.

- Community organizers and politically aware STEM workers must seek out community knowledge.



- Scientific knowledge is more robust when it includes more people with more diverse experiences and perspectives (“strong objectivity”).



When people come together to share their different forms of expertise in a collective effort to achieve justice, we call that:

# SOLIDARITY SCIENCE!

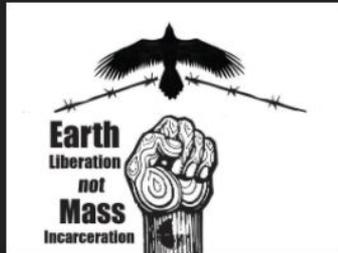
*How do we enact solidarity science?*

→ Reimagining curriculum & integrating SJ topics in STEM classrooms

→ Working with community organizers & leveraging STEM to work for the people

## Another World is Possible: Abolition Ecologies

Emma Harnisch & Mia Fuentes Deonate



Fighttoxicprisons.org



Bruno Mallart



Mold Action Committee



Science  
for  
the  
People

**To:** The Massachusetts Department of Public Health

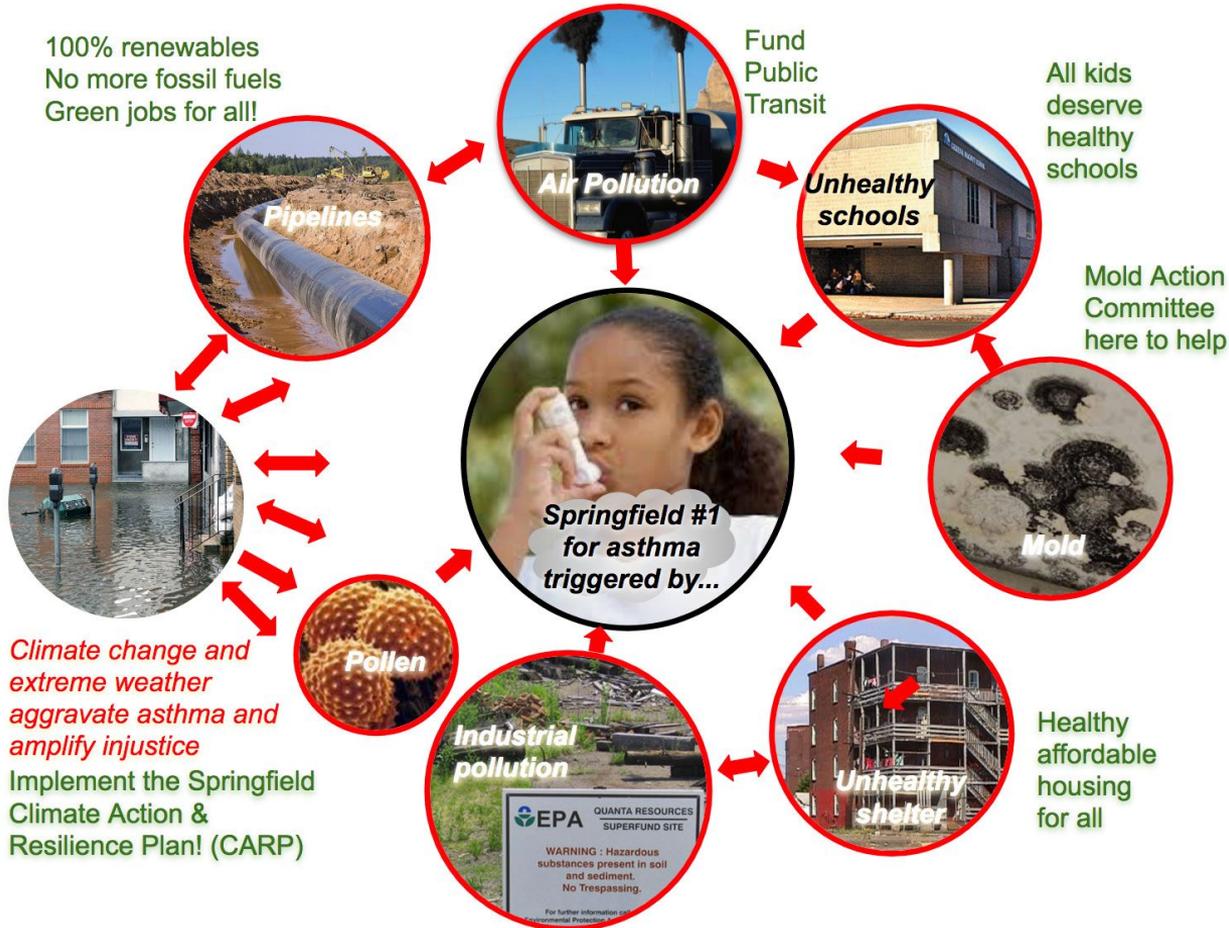
**From:** Members of Arise for Social Justice, The Mold Action Committee, and Western Massachusetts Science for the People

**Subject:** Comments on proposed amendments to 105 CMR 410.000 – Minimum Standards of Fitness for Human Habitation (State Sanitary Code, Chapter II)

**Date:** 12 September 2019

We thank the Department of Public Health for its continued efforts to amend the State Sanitary Code to better protect the health of all residents of Massachusetts.

# Mold, Health, and Justice



# Mold, Health, and Justice

A complex problem requires many types of experts, each with their own forms of situated knowledge:

- Lab scientists
- Housing law experts
- Community organizers
- Doctors
- People living with mold – maybe especially mothers, guardians, caregivers, elders...

# The Making of the Mold Lady

Known as the “Mold Lady,” Tatiana is a community expert. Her expertise comes from her experience:

- living with mold in her Springfield apartment
- caring for her son with a mold allergy
- fighting her landlord to address the mold issue
- working with lawyers and judges in housing court
- educating community members, and
- working with multiple activist organizations

# Transition to Break-Out Groups: Applying this Model to Other Scenarios

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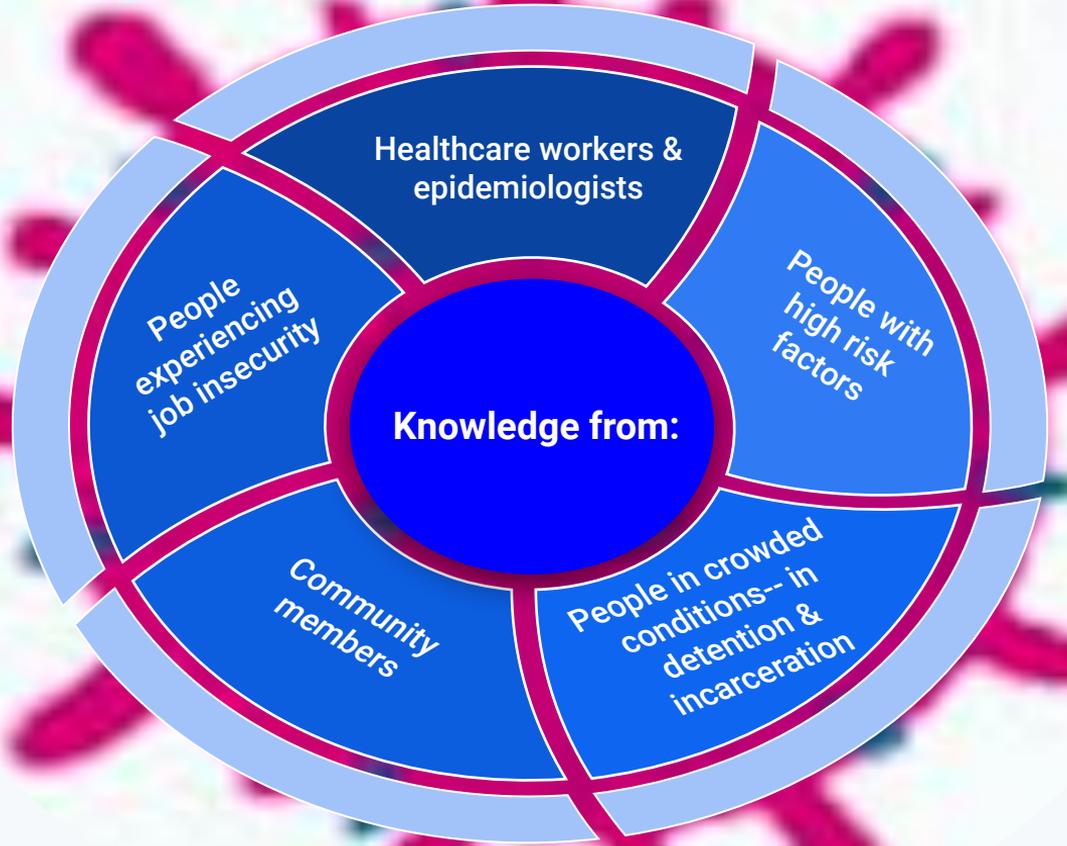
- Our communities face many pressing problems related to: health, environment, food, transportation, climate change, policing, etc.
- Try to recreate the Mold, Health, Social Justice connection map for your topic.
- What kinds of expertise are needed to develop robust and socially just solutions?
- Who has this expertise? Who is often left out of decision making?
- How would you bring these different experts together in dialogue and collaboration?



# Can we take a ***Solidarity Science*** approach to COVID-19?



# YES!



# The Pandemic & Workers' Rights

**We demand that all public and private healthcare institutions listen to and meet the needs of nurses and healthcare workers**

**We demand that these workers be given adequate pay, benefits, and protection immediately, not only during the pandemic but permanently**

**We demand that healthcare and essential service workers be given proper personal protective equipment for their safety**

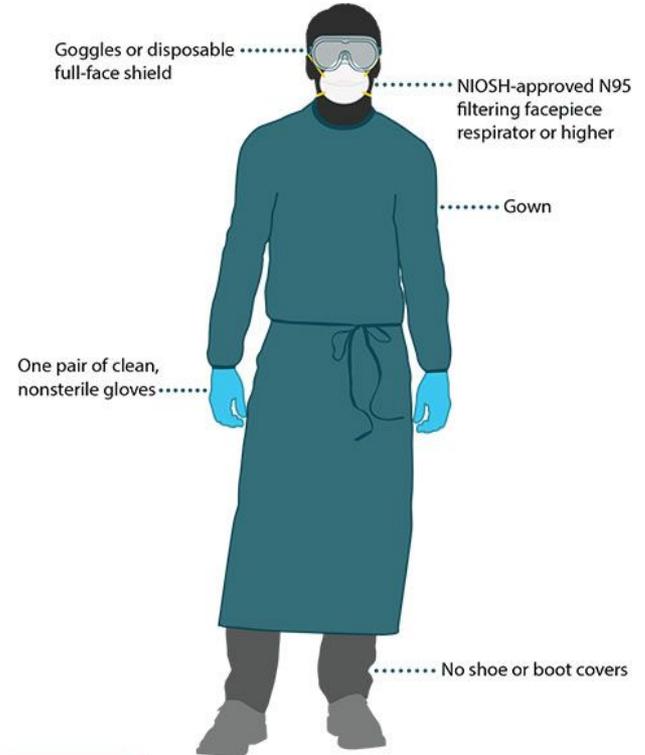
**We demand adequate funding and support for public research institutions**

## **PPE Campaign:**

Demand your academic institutions, laboratories, manufacturers, etc. to donate their existing PPE to frontline healthcare workers



## COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Healthcare Personnel



03/15/2014 8:01:00

For more information: [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)

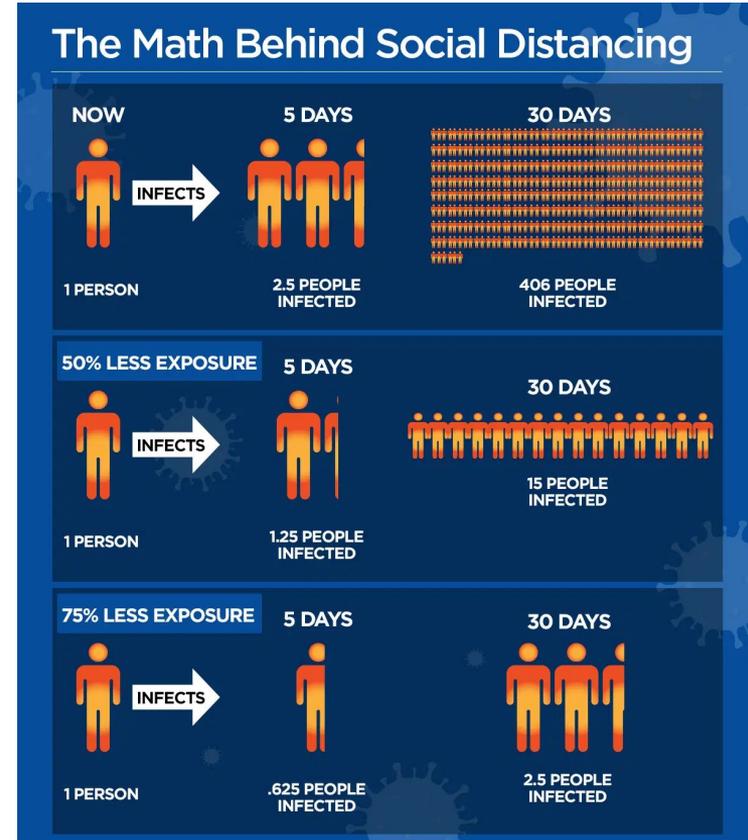
# Pandemic Epidemiology Calls for Decarceration

We demand that [the needs of low income and marginalized populations] are put first in public assistance programs dealing with the pandemic

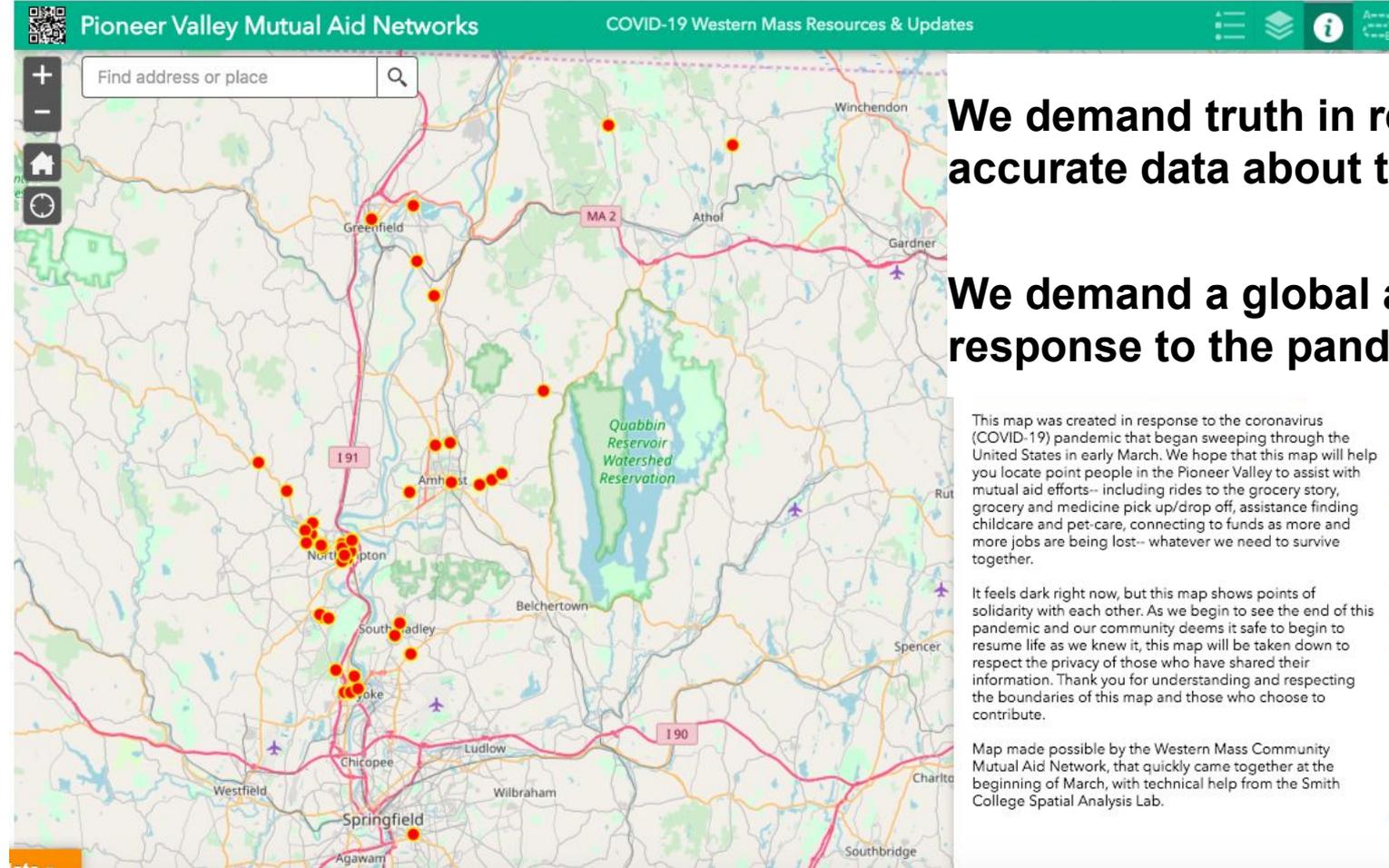
We demand that any science and technology developed to respond to the pandemic are available for all, without profit or patent

## Decarceration Campaign:

- Prisons are overcrowded
- Many low-income folks are held on bail
- Incarceration enforces systemic oppression



# The Pandemic & Public Response



**We demand truth in reporting and accurate data about the pandemic**

**We demand a global and peaceful response to the pandemic**

This map was created in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that began sweeping through the United States in early March. We hope that this map will help you locate point people in the Pioneer Valley to assist with mutual aid efforts-- including rides to the grocery store, grocery and medicine pick up/drop off, assistance finding childcare and pet-care, connecting to funds as more and more jobs are being lost-- whatever we need to survive together.

It feels dark right now, but this map shows points of solidarity with each other. As we begin to see the end of this pandemic and our community deems it safe to begin to resume life as we knew it, this map will be taken down to respect the privacy of those who have shared their information. Thank you for understanding and respecting the boundaries of this map and those who choose to contribute.

Map made possible by the Western Mass Community Mutual Aid Network, that quickly came together at the beginning of March, with technical help from the Smith College Spatial Analysis Lab.

