

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Concern that health promotion not a priority

The Editor

Recently, the departments of Health and Health Promotion and Protection merged to form the new Department of Health and Wellness. Doctors Nova Scotia understands the importance of balancing the financial challenges facing our province; however, it's critical that health promotion and disease prevention continue to be a top priority for the province.

Nova Scotia has one of the highest rates of chronic disease and obesity in the country. With inactivity and unhealthy eating becoming more prevalent, doctors in the province see the benefit of investing in preventative care with the goal of improving the health of all Nova Scotians.

In order for Nova Scotia to have a healthy population and a sustainable health-care system we need to continue to make sure that health promotion and disease prevention continues to be a main concern for the government. Physicians are concerned that without a unique voice at cabinet, health promotion will no longer be a priority.

In a time when our health-care system has so many issues including long wait times and difficulty accessing primary care, we need to continue making investments not only in the health-care system, but in preventative initiatives. Doctors Nova Scotia hopes that the new Department of Health and Wellness will continue with the important work of the Department of Health Promotion and Protection.

Being healthy starts long before a visit to the doctors' office and that's exactly why Doctors Nova Scotia invests in preventive programs to help Nova Scotians eat healthy, get active and adopt health conscious lifestyles.

As we look for better ways for patients to access care, we also need to look for ways to prevent illnesses. Doctors Nova Scotia looks forward to working with the new Department of Health and Wellness to ensure that our government continues to take a proactive approach to Nova Scotians' health.

Jane Brooks, MD, PhD, CCFP
President, Doctors Nova Scotia

February is Heart Month

The Editor

This year, thousands of Nova Scotians will fall victim to one of Canada's leading health threats - heart disease or stroke.

The good news is heart disease is preventable and manageable. Many heart attacks become fatal when warning signs are brushed off as minor irritations. For example, common symptoms of heart attacks include chest pain, a burning sensation in the chest and anxiety. These are common symptoms for several conditions, and are easily mistaken for heartburn or stress.

There is no sure way to stop yourself from having a heart attack, but you can reduce your risk factors. Doctors in Nova Scotia encourage you to keep your heart healthy by not smoking, reducing your salt intake, cutting down on fatty foods and eating more fruit and vegetables. These changes can help lower high blood pressure and high cholesterol. It's also impor-

tant to properly manage your weight, stress levels, diabetes and avoid excessive alcohol consumption.

It is also extremely important to be physically active. You can give your heart exercise in several different ways. Whether you enjoy going to the gym or going for walks in your neighbourhood, exercise doesn't have to be a chore. Small changes in your day-to-day life such as parking on the far side of the parking lot, taking the stairs rather than the elevator, or walking a few extra laps around the grocery store can make a huge difference in the long-run. Remember, every little bit helps.

Visit your family doctor to assess your risk for heart disease and stroke. Your doctor can help get you started on the path to a healthy heart. To learn more about heart disease, visit www.heartandstroke.ns.ca.

Jane Brooks, MD, PhD, CCFP,
President, Doctors Nova Scotia

Letters to the Editor Policy

The Victoria Standard welcomes letters of interest to our readers. Letters published do not necessarily reflect the policies or beliefs of the staff of The Victoria Standard.

All letters must bear the signature of the writer and include the writer's address and phone number for verification. Addresses and phone numbers will not be printed. The use of any letters submitted is at the discretion of the editor. The editor reserves the right to edit letters to meet space requirements, for clarity, or to avoid obscenity, libel or invasion of privacy.

Mail to P.O. Box 629, Baddeck, Nova Scotia B0E 1B0



The Victoria Standard

The Victoria Standard is published fortnightly by Bras d'Or Graphic Marketing Services.

Editor and General Manager: James Morrow

Copy/Design/Subscriptions: John Johnson

Advertising/Sales: Jim Ryan

PO Box 629, Baddeck, Cape Breton
Canada • Nova Scotia • B0E 1B0

902-295-1144 • Fax 902-295-1143

E-Mail: victoriastandard@ns.sympatico.ca

Copyright and/or property rights apply to all advertisements appearing in The Victoria Standard. Reproduction of advertisements, in whole or part, is not permitted. Copyright and/or property rights are available for purchase.

Mailed under Canadian Publications Sales Agreement #221740

NSPI could teach loan sharks a thing or two

The Editor

A number of years ago, I signed up for the budget plan with Nova Scotia Power. I found this very convenient. Once a year, NSPI would tell me what my monthly payment would be for the next twelve months. This made it easy to budget.

In 2010, I received a notice informing me what my payment would be for the next twelve months. Since I retired in 2009 (on a fixed income, I might add), I was at home more and was able to reduce our power consumption by a considerable amount. I felt satisfied that I was doing my part to reduce consumption, reduce greenhouse gases and also pay a lower amount.

In November of 2010, I received a letter from NSPI indicating they were

changing the way they calculated the monthly payment. This calculation would now be based on a 10-year average rather than the previous year.

Today was my payment date, and as of 10 a.m. I had no notice of what my payment would be. I phoned NSPI and was informed my payment would increase by 53%. Yes, 53%! I realize that part of this is the rate increase, but 53%? Also, I still have a credit on my bill from last year and this will only increase with the whopping increase.

Payday loans and loan sharks should take a lesson from NSPI on how to gouge a customer. Whose bright idea was it to privatize NSPI anyway, so the shareholders can make a money grab with my money?

Fraser Patterson,
Ross Ferry

Chuck Thompson's "Along the Trail"

"Not embracing all technology"



I now understand "The Hermit of Gully Lake." You may remember the story of Willard Kitchener MacDonald, the eccentric, reclusive man who lived and roamed the woods in back of Economy, near Truro. Mr. MacDonald became a celebrity by completely avoiding celebrity at all costs. A strange concept but a true one, nonetheless. Mr. MacDonald made it a point to avoid people by whatever means, whatever it took. His was a Spartan life of a tumble down shack and food gleaned from the woods nearby. Contrast that with today when people are famous for being famous as one journalist so succinctly put it. Paris Hilton, the Kardashians, are famous for being famous. I lean more toward to Mr. MacDonald than the Hollywood starlets.

Now, don't get me wrong, I can be stroked and appreciate attention as much as the next guy. No, it's the age we live in that drives the Hermit of Gully Lake in me.

Technologically, I began to drop behind when TV's moved beyond vertical and horizontal hold buttons to make them work. Up til then I was fine. Fiddle with the knob, give it a spin or two and you could get the picture to stop rolling and remain stationary for the duration of the evening viewing. If you were feeling particularly adventuresome, you could even tweak the contrast knob to up the viewing pleasure. And there were only twelve channels. By eleven o'clock the test pattern would appear and a deep voice would inform you "And that concludes our broadcast for today, good night."

Now, you need at least two years at Community College just to program the three remotes you use trying to find a hockey game on the tube. I have become so inept I often spend the night watching the aquarium channel because I have locked up one remote or another.

Not only am I inept but I live in suppressed terror every time a new gadget moves into my life. I do not wish to return to the days of "Get me Middle River, 13 ring 5, but I am not doing well with all the latest in phone technology. I mean you see babies with diaper pins sticking in their sides as they try to "Tweet" the kid in the next crib at daycare and I am barely able to

turn it on. So, now I have been reduced to calling my daughter in the Valley or my nephew in Orillia when the TV crashes.

It only took me about two years to rise above the fear of the debit machine. I was doing good until the makers of these machines decided every retail outlet should have a different model and a small manual to accompany them just so you could get a little of your own money back. Restaurants now have models that ask you if you want to leave a tip. (Does anyone ever say no?) Then the screen asks you 1. amount, 2. % or 3. other. That is usually good enough to bring out the sweat because if you dare ask for help, someone with the voice of a ringside announcer hollers out "What amount, Sir?" "Ah, twenty per cent or twenty dollars, which ever is more," I weakly reply in case the rest of the restaurant or in some cases the County, thinks me a cheap skate.

I have started to drift away from the cashier when it comes time to pay up and let my much more adroit wife handle the transaction.

The final (is there ever a final?) straw may have come on a quick dash into Home Hardware to pick up a window ice scraper ahead of the dire storm warnings. Time was when you had two choices: a small hand held scraper that was just a little more efficient than a warm credit card or the more elaborate one with the long handle to reach the middle of your vehicle.

No more. They have short ones, long ones, expandable handle ones, ergonomic ones, double bristle ones. I stared dumbstruck with the choices hung before me. I wondered if more people were travelling to Florida just to escape this conundrum.

The other day I went into a Temple of Tim's and watched two prepubescent kids texting away, probably to each other. Me, I had this wild idea you went there for a coffee and maybe a bathroom break. Who knew?

No question, I am in trouble. Not quite old enough to use the age excuse and not young enough to care enough to learn.

People who want to help start explaining ad nausea how this thingee or that thingee works and then they realize I have glazed over like a man going down for the third time.

Actually, if you look long enough those virtual fish start to look real!

chuckthompson47@hotmail.com