

Curious where federal candidates stand on a national dementia strategy

To the Editor,

I attended Croft Talks last week at the Bancroft Village Playhouse in support of Hospice North Hastings which I thought was very well organized and moderated by Barb Shaw. Thank you Barb for bringing a new opportunity for local people to become involved in the issues impacting those of us who chose to live North of 7. I was interested to have the opportunity to speak to all three federal candidates after the show as it provided me the opportunity to ask each of them individually why they did not answer an email I recently sent to each of them entitled Open Letter to Rona Ambrose regarding recent proposed CCAC cutbacks in PSW services impacting my family. Each one of them identified that they were "too busy."

When I specifically asked Daryl Kramp what his reasoning was for choosing on May 6, 2015 to vote "No" for the proposed Bill C 356, an Act respecting a National Strategy for Dementia, when 9 of the 149 Conservatives voted Yes which means 140 Conservatives voted No, every Liberal and NDP voted Yes while every independent voted Yes except one, his answer was that a National Strategy for Dementia was "covered by the Mental Health Strategy," which was created eight years ago. Proposed Bill C 356 was defeated by one vote.

Mr Kramp, you agreed to provide me an apology should the Mental Health Strategy not actually "cover" a National Strategy for Dementia. Mr. Kramp, had you taken the time to read the 154 page document entitled Changing Directions, Changing Lives: a Mental Health Strategy for Canada which clearly lays out 6 Strategic Directions, Priorities and Recommendations for Action regarding mental health, you will have noted that the word Dementia was referred to merely 4 times in the Seniors chapter along with various forms of mental illness, suicide and elder abuse. The focus is clearly on mental health and can in no way "cover" a National Dementia Strategy. Dementia requires the same formatted approach as the government created for mental health to address the specific needs of Dementia regarding neurobiology, home care, long term care, informal caregiving, research and co-ordinated implementation of needed services. Many Canadian provinces have, or are working on, provincial strategies preparing for a government to see the importance of the development of a National Strategy. Many other nations of the world have already developed a National Strategy for Dementia intended to streamline services, cut duplication and equalize accessibility which will actually cut health care costs in the long term. I can only assume this present government is not forward thinking enough to see a crisis is not looming, here in Canada we are in a crisis surrounding Dementia services NOW!

As you have neither answered my voicemail messages or emails to discuss this issue, I felt it necessary for our voting public to know where you personally stand on this issue, given your explanation is unfortunately political rhetoric.

I believe you owe me the apology which you promised me you would provide if you were wrong, and clearly, you are wrong.

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