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MP Linda Lapointe's involvement in the local food drives



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Linda Lapointe's grassroots tour: From policy to compassion in action

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When Liberal MP Linda Lapointe talks about community, it's more than a political slogan—it's a lived experience. Her recent tour of local associations across Rivière-des-Mille-Îles showcased her commitment to dialogue and collaboration, but it was her hands-on involvement in community food drives that truly captured the heart of her mission.

"I'm always moved by the compassion and generosity that define our community," Lapointe said, reflecting on the experience. Her gratitude extended to everyone who gave their time and energy to support this cause. The atmosphere was one of solidarity—boxes of non-perishables stacked high, laughter echoing as volunteers worked tirelessly to make a difference.

Rosemère joins the effort
The spirit of giving didn't stop in Boisbriand.



Lapointe's recent association tour focused on economic development, inclusivity, and sustainability, echoing priorities she champions in Parliament. Her work on the Standing Committee on International Trade and Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics reflects a commitment to transparency and growth.

A legacy of leadership
Before politics, Lapointe led business organizations like the Regroupement des gens d'affaires de Boisbriand and the Association des détaillants en alimentation du Québec, earning a Hall

of Fame induction for her contributions. That experience informs her pragmatic approach: listening first, acting with purpose.

The heartbeat of a community
As the holiday season approaches, Lapointe's message is clear: community matters most. Whether in a boardroom or a food drive warehouse, her actions speak louder than words. "When we come together, we create hope," she said. And in Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, hope is abundant—thanks to leaders and volunteers who believe in the power of giving.



December 1: a day of giving
On December 1, 2025, Lapointe rolled up her sleeves in Boisbriand, joining a dedicated team of volunteers for the annual food drive. Among those working side by side were Yves Thériault from the Marine Patrol, local Scouts, and City staff, all united by a common purpose: ensuring families in need have food on their tables this holiday season.

Over the weekend, Lapointe participated in the Rosemère food drive, reinforcing her belief that these grassroots initiatives are the backbone of community resilience. "These moments remind us that politics isn't just about laws—it's about people," she noted.

Connecting policy and people
While her food drive participation was deeply personal, it complements her broader agenda.





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A historic first for the North Shore: Rosemère's Marie-Elaine Pitre steps into a trailblazing role at the MRC

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The political landscape of the North Shore shifted this week, when Rosemère mayor Marie-Elaine Pitre was appointed Acting Warden of the MRC Thérèse-De Blainville, becoming one half of the first all-female leadership team to guide the regional body since its creation more than four decades ago. Her appointment was confirmed on November 28, marking a milestone moment for municipal governance in the Laurentian gateway.

Pitre joins Liza Poulin, mayor of Blainville, who was elected by acclamation to a two-year term as warden. Together, the two mayors, each already a familiar presence in regional affairs, now stand at the forefront of a territory undergoing rapid transformation. From swelling residential developments to sustained industrial growth, the MRC's decisions increasingly shape the everyday lives of nearly 168,000 people spread across seven municipalities.

Speaking after her appointment, Pitre described the moment as both humbling and energizing. "I am grateful for the trust my colleagues have placed in me," she said, noting that the partnership with Poulin opens the door to "working with everyone who is involved in our region" as they prepare for the challenges ahead.

A region at a crossroads

Stretching across 207 square kilometres, from the wooded edges of Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines to the compact urban character of Sainte-Thérèse, the MRC Thérèse-De Blainville sits at the junction of key north-south and east-west transportation corridors. Its residents have long watched the region evolve from bedroom-community suburbia into a dynamic mixture of agricultural zones, industrial parks, commercial districts, and tightly knit neighbourhoods.

This evolution has placed increasing weight on the MRC's responsibilities. Its council oversees land-use planning, cultural development, civil security and fire-safety coordination, road-safety awareness, economic development, watercourse management, and collective initiatives touching everything from public transportation to social and affordable housing. It even delves into more modern concerns like artificial intelligence, reflecting the shifting priorities of a rapidly growing population.

Building the table around them

The council meeting that confirmed Pitre's appointment also set the stage for the region's representation on broader metropolitan bodies. Sainte-Thérèse mayor Christian Charron will now serve as the MRC's delegate to the board of the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal,

while Poulin and Charron will sit at the Table des préfets et des élus de la Couronne Nord, a crucial forum for negotiating the interests of the Northern Crown. Pitre and Poulin will also represent the MRC at the Conseil des préfets et des élus des Laurentides, reinforcing links to the wider Laurentian region.

These appointments underline the MRC's growing influence. Decisions taken at these tables ripple outward, affecting planning strategies, funding priorities, housing guidelines, and transportation debates across the North Shore.

A leadership team reflecting a changing Quebec

The arrival of Poulin and Pitre as the first all-female leadership duo is more than a historic first; it reflects the changing demographics and expectations of northern Montreal suburbs. The two mayors represent municipalities that have seen some of the fastest population growth in the province, driven by housing demand, quality-of-life appeal, and cultural vibrancy.

Their partnership comes at a pivotal moment. Residents are increasingly vocal about traffic congestion, the preservation of natural areas, fire-safety readiness, and affordable housing options. Municipal leaders across the seven towns know that regional cooperation will determine how successfully the area adapts.



The new leadership team appears keenly aware of that. Their appointment comes with the implicit expectation that the MRC will navigate this period of transformation with clarity and unity—balancing development with heritage, growth with sustainability, and local concerns with metropolitan realities.

Looking ahead

For Rosemère's mayor, the new role places her at the centre of some of the region's most consequential decisions. For the MRC, it marks the beginning of a term defined by a different kind of leadership, one that mirrors the community's evolution and promises a renewed focus on collaboration.

And for the North Shore, it signals something increasingly rare in politics: a genuine turning point.

Deux-Montagnes awards more than \$73,000 to local organizations and high-performance athletes

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The City of Deux-Montagnes highlighted the heartbeat of its community this week, awarding a total of 73,930 dollars in financial support to local organizations and promising young athletes. The annual ceremony took place on November 18, celebrating the individuals and groups whose work keeps the city's cultural, social, and athletic life thriving.

This year, 31 accredited community organizations received a combined 72,730 dollars in municipal funding. These groups represent a wide range of services and activities, from cultural programming to sports, senior services, youth initiatives, and community support networks. The city also distributed an additional 1,200 dollars to eight high-performance athletes whose dedication and achievements have brought visibility and pride to the

community.

Mayor Denis Martin spoke warmly about the impact of the organizations recognized, noting that their contributions shape the quality of life in Deux-Montagnes in measurable ways. He emphasized that these groups inspire residents, mobilize volunteers, and strengthen the social fabric through countless hours of commitment. The city's support, he said, is both a gesture of recognition and a reinforcement of their ongoing missions.

The mayor was joined by members of the municipal council, who personally thanked the volunteers, staff members, and community partners behind each organization. Their presence underscored the value the city places on civic engagement and on the people whose work often takes place behind the scenes yet remains essential to local vitality.

The evening served as a reminder that the strength of Deux-Montagnes lies not only in its

infrastructure or public services but also, and perhaps most importantly, in the dedication

of its residents who invest time, talent, and passion into the community.



The City of Deux-Montagnes awarded 73,930 dollars to local organizations and high-performance athletes during its annual financial recognition ceremony.

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OPINION & Editorial



Cutting red tape could help solve Canada's doctor crisis

Doctors spend more time on paperwork than on patients and that's fueling Canada's health care wait lists

Canada doesn't just lack doctors—it squanders the ones it has. Mountains of paperwork and pointless admin chew up tens of millions of physician hours every year, time that could erase the so-called shortage and slash wait lists if freed for patient care.

Recruiting more doctors helps, but the fastest cure for our sick system is cutting the bureaucracy that strangles the ones already here.

The Canadian Medical Association found that unnecessary non-patient work consumes millions of hours annually. That's the equivalent of 50.5 million patient visits, enough to give every Canadian at least one appointment and likely erase the physician shortage. Meanwhile, the Canadian Institute for Health Information estimates more than six million Canadians don't even have a family doctor. That's roughly one in six of us.

And it's not just patients who feel the shortage—doctors themselves are paying the price. Endless forms don't just waste time; they drive doctors out of the profession. Burned out and frustrated, many cut their hours or leave entirely. And the foreign doctors that health authorities are trying to recruit? They might think twice once they discover how much time Canadian physicians spend on paperwork that adds nothing to patient care.

But freeing doctors from forms isn't as simple as shredding them. Someone has to build systems that actually reduce, rather than add to, the workload. And that's where things get tricky. Trimming red tape usually means more Information Technology (IT), and big software projects have a well-earned reputation for spiralling in cost.

Bent Flyvbjerg, the global guru of project disasters, and his colleagues examined more than 5,000 IT projects in a 2022 study. They found outcomes didn't follow a neat bell curve but a "power-law" distribution, meaning costs don't just rise steadily, they explode in a fat tail of nasty surprises as variables multiply.

Oxford University and McKinsey offered equally bleak news. Their joint study concluded: "On average, large IT projects run 45 per cent over budget and seven per cent over time while delivering 56 per cent less value than predicted." If that sounds familiar, it should. Canada's Phoenix federal payroll fiasco—the payroll software introduced by Ottawa that left tens of thousands of federal workers underpaid or unpaid—is a cautionary tale etched into the national memory.

The lesson isn't to avoid technology, but to get it right. Canada can't sidestep the digital route. The question is whether we adapt what others have built or design our own. One option is borrowing from the U.S. or U.K., where electronic health record (EHR) systems (the digital patient files used by doctors and hospitals) are already in place. Both countries have had headaches with their systems, thanks to legal and regulatory differences. But there are signs of progress.

The U.K. is experimenting with artificial intelligence to lighten the administrative load, and a joint U.K.-U.S. study gives a glimpse of what's possible:

"... AI technologies such as Robotic Process Automation (RPA), predictive analytics, and Natural Language Processing (NLP) are transforming health care administration. RPA and

AI-driven software applications are revolutionizing health care administration by automating routine tasks such as appointment scheduling, billing, and documentation. By handling repetitive, rule-based tasks with speed and accuracy, these technologies minimize errors, reduce administrative burden, and enhance overall operational efficiency."

For patients, that could mean fewer missed referrals, faster follow-up calls and less time waiting for paperwork to clear before treatment. Still, even the best tools come with limits. Systems differ, and customization will drive up costs. But medicine is medicine, and AI tools can bridge more gaps than you might think.

Run the math. If each "freed" patient visit is worth just \$20—a conservative figure for the value of a basic appointment—the payoff could hit \$1 billion in a single year.

Updating costs would continue, but that's still cheap compared to the human and financial toll of endless wait lists. Cost-sharing between provinces, Ottawa, municipalities and even doctors themselves could spread the risk. Competitive bidding, with honest budgets and realistic timelines, is non-negotiable if we want to dodge another Phoenix-sized fiasco.

The alternative—clinging to our current dysfunctional patchwork of physician information systems—isn't really an option. It means more frustrated doctors walking away, fewer new ones coming in, and Canadians left to languish on wait lists that grow ever longer.

And that's not health care: it's managed decline.

Ian Madsen

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RIPTB highlights community-focused policing at the Réseau Intersection Colloquium

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For two days, the École nationale de police du Québec (ENPQ) in Nicolet became the centre of provincial and international reflection on community policing, as the Réseau Intersection Colloquium brought together police services from across Quebec along with invited partners from abroad. The Régie intermunicipale de police Thérèse-De Blainville (RIPTB) was proud to participate in an event that continues to shape how police agencies address the social realities facing their communities.

The Réseau Intersection, created to support the development of police de proximité in Quebec, has built a strong reputation for offering concrete, research-based approaches to public safety. Each year, the colloquium focuses on practical strategies to improve the relationship between police and the public, particularly in areas involving prevention, mental health, vulnerable populations, youth engagement, and coordinated intervention with municipal and social partners. Held in collaboration with the ENPQ, the gathering is recognized as one of the province's key platforms for advancing modern policing.

One of the distinguishing features of this year's edition was the participation of several representatives from Belgium, a country widely known for its national commitment to proximity policing. Belgian police operate under a federal framework that mandates local anchoring, regular contact with citizens, and

a shared responsibility between police zones and municipalities. Their contribution to the colloquium brought a valuable international perspective, especially in discussions about multidisciplinary intervention teams, crisis response protocols, and long-term prevention planning. Their experiences offered points of comparison and reflection for Quebec services, including the RIPTB, which has long integrated similar principles into its daily operations.

Throughout the event, discussions repeatedly returned to the evolving nature of police work. Many presenters highlighted the rise in calls linked to mental health, homelessness, substance use, and other complex social challenges that require close coordination with external partners. Others examined the role of schools, community associations, and municipal agencies in reinforcing early prevention. This emphasis on shared responsibility mirrors the RIPTB's ongoing commitment to maintaining strong ties with local organizations, municipal councils, and citizen groups, ensuring that policing remains centered on collaboration rather than simple response.

The Service de police de Richelieu-Saint-Laurent, which oversaw this year's organization, ensured a fluid and well-structured program, with sessions that stayed grounded in real-world experience. Their leadership contributed significantly to the event's success and to the quality of the exchanges taking place throughout the colloquium.

For the RIPTB, the experience served as both a reaffirmation of its long-standing philosophy and an opportunity to engage with new ideas. The conversations in Nicolet made clear that effective public safety relies not only on patrols and investigations, but on presence, prevention, dialogue, and trust. The colloquium emphasized that community policing is not static; it evolves with society's needs and with the willingness of police services to adapt and learn.

As the RIPTB returns to its territory, it carries with it the insights, partnerships, and renewed motivation inspired by the colloquium. The two days at the ENPQ highlighted the strength of collective reflection and offered powerful confirmation of the central role that proximity, understanding, and cooperation play in building safe and resilient communities.



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Ottawa's Dental Care Plan reaches new milestone, improving access, says Health Minister

But not everything is covered, Marjorie Michel admits after announcing additional funding

MARTIN C. BARRY
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While acknowledging that Ottawa's Canadian Dental Care Plan may be leaving some users with a relatively small sum to pay off whenever they go to the dentist, Health Minister Marjorie Michel says it's up to the dentists themselves to decide whether they're willing to shoulder that extra cost.

More funds for oral health

Michel, who is the Liberal MP for Papineau which includes Parc Extension, held a press conference in Villeray on November 24 to announce additional funding of more than \$35 million over three years for 30 projects under the Oral Health Access Fund (OHAF).

According to a press release issued by the federal health ministry, the projects will improve training for dental students by allowing them to obtain the hands-on experience they need to provide care to Canadians across the country while strengthening efforts to improve access to care.

According to the ministry, close to six million

Canadians are now covered under the Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP). "The CDCP is making life more affordable by saving eligible Canadians an average of \$800 per year on their oral health care services," says the ministry.

Most dentists are on board

The health ministry says that currently more than 27,000 dentists and other oral health providers are participating in the CDCP, offering a wide range of services that include cleanings, fillings and dentures, representing close to 100 per cent of active providers in Canada.

In Quebec alone, according to summary data posted online by the CDCP, 1,653,165 Quebecers have signed up for the program. The total number of approved applicants in Quebec who received care for benefit year 2025 to 2026 stands at 552,621 users.

According to the ministry, some CDCP program subscribers saw an oral health provider for the first time in decades after signing on. The ministry notes that without access to dental care, many people visit medical emergency rooms for dental issues that could be treated in a dentist's office. Hence, the CDCP is helping ease pressure on Canada's health care system,



Canadian Health Minister and Papineau Liberal MP Marjorie Michel (third from right) is seen here with Marc-Aurèle Fortin Liberal MP Carlos Leitão (third from left) and representatives from various local community groups during Michel's announcement in Villeray on November 24. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

they claim.

"Thanks to the CDCP Canadians are now receiving the preventive care they need, and this program is only possible because of the commitment and participation of almost all oral providers across the country," Michel said in a statement. "Our support to new training projects will not only empower the next generation of oral health professionals, but also contribute to lower costs for families."

Not everything is covered

As for the users' leftover billing fees, CBC News Ottawa reported in July that some dentistry patients were under the impression all their dental work was free. The reality is that the program reimburses dentists' rates as determined by provincial billing guidelines.

It might also be noted that Health Canada describes the Canadian Dental Care Plan as "helping make the cost of dental care more affordable," while making no claims about providing full and comprehensive coverage.

As a result, many dentists' offices charge the difference between the price of the procedures and what CDCP pays them. For example, a recent bill for a total of \$257 issued for basic treatments by a practitioner at a west-end Montreal dentists' office left the patient on the hook for \$57.39 after CDCP paid \$199.61.

Answering journalists' questions, Michel maintained that the program was never conceived to cover 100 per cent of costs. She suggested that those enrolled in the CDCP should shop around for a dentist who is willing to waive or charge less for the stub.

How to apply for CDCP

All eligible Canadians can apply to the CDCP. To qualify, applicants must: Not have access to dental insurance; Have filed their individual 2024 tax return in Canada (and their spouse's or common-law partner's (if applicable); Have an adjusted family net income of less than \$90,000; And be a Canadian resident for tax purposes.

Temporary transfer of Saint-Eustache birthing unit sends expectant mothers to Laval for three months



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Expectant mothers in the Laurentides will see a temporary change in their birthing arrangements this month, as the CISSS des Laurentides confirms that the birth unit at Saint-Eustache Hospital will be relocated to Laval for approximately three months beginning December 5 at 8 a.m.

The decision is not the result of infrastructure issues, but of a shortage of gynecologists and obstetricians, a challenge that has affected several regions in recent years. According to

the CISSS, the temporary move is meant to safeguard the continuity and quality of care for pregnant patients until the medical team in Saint-Eustache can be reinforced.

During this period, the full care team from Saint-Eustache's birthing unit, including nurses and physicians, will be transferred to Cité-de-la-Santé Hospital in Laval. The intention is to ensure that women continue receiving the same level of care from the same professionals, only in a different location.

Pregnant women who had been planning to deliver at Saint-Eustache will not need to take any steps on their own. Their care provider

will notify them of the change and answer any concerns. The CISSS emphasized that all patients will be supported through the transition and encouraged anyone with questions to continue relying on the clinician overseeing their pregnancy.

The organization is working to stabilize the medical workforce at Saint-Eustache as quickly as possible to restore local birthing services. Until then, Laval will serve as the temporary delivery site for families across the region.

More information is available on the CISSS des Laurentides website under the section on labour and delivery.



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Task Force submits brief to National Assembly on Legault government's Bill 1

Proposed Quebec constitution law would prioritize French, secularism and collective rights

MARTIN C. BARRY
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After reading and analyzing the Legault government's Bill 1, the Task Force on Linguistic Policy has concluded the proposed constitution legislation "is a threat to the 1.25 million English speaking Quebecers, a threat to Quebec's future in Canada, and "sends a clear message to all non-francophones: 'you do not exist'"

Since its founding in 2021, the Task Force, led by Andrew Caddell, has organized public meetings and rallies, submitted legal briefs to courts, the National Assembly and Parliament, and held expert panel discussions to oppose both Bill 96 and the use of the Canadian constitution's controversial Notwithstanding Clause.

Their Bill 1 reaction brief submitted to elected officials at the Quebec National Assembly stated the concerns of the Task Force.

Fleeting mention of Anglos

Mentioned in the 11-page document is the draft legislation's fleeting mention of Anglophone institutions. "In doing so, it fails to recognize the enormous contributions of English-speaking Quebecers for three centuries and more," stated the Task Force.

"The bill places collective rights, secularism and the French language above human rights," they maintain. "This creates an inverted pyramid of rights where the collective supersedes the

individual"

The brief outlines Bill 1's objectives, the Task Force's objections, legal issues and recommended changes. Among other things, it notes that the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights does not recognize collective rights, stating rather that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

The brief refutes the CAQ government's claim of Quebec being self-determined, the ability to hold a referendum with a winning margin of 50 per cent plus one, and denounces Bill 1, saying "the contempt for our federal system runs throughout this legislation," as the proposed law refers to Canada as a "loose federation of autonomous states."

'Radical and unconstitutional'

The Task Force concludes that Bill 1 "is a radical and unconstitutional blueprint for provincial autonomy. It is a blueprint for a controlled demolition of the existing federal system."

The Task Force stated in its conclusion, "We recognize and encourage the flourishing of French as the majority language in Quebec. But we stand with those who do not speak French: the elderly, visible minorities, the rural poor, the indigenous people, the physically and mentally challenged.

"These are the people who require government services. Many were not educated in Canada, and therefore could be denied government services according to Bill 96 and would be permanently

discriminated against in Bill 1.

"That is unfair, egregious, immoral and unconstitutional. It is not the Quebec that we know, and it is not the Quebec we see evolving into the future. Quebec will be a pariah in the western world by adopting such a fundamental law. And we will join in the criticisms of it until it is withdrawn."

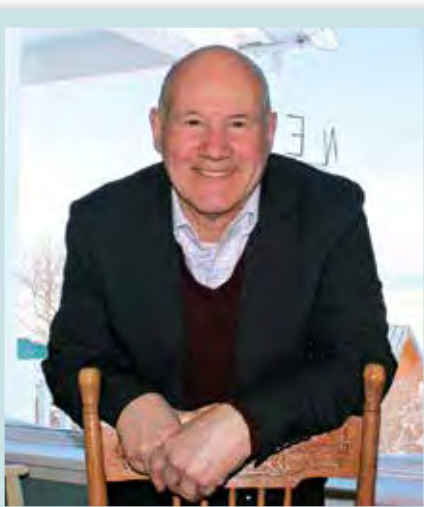
Narrow-minded laws

The Task Force maintains that Bill 1 "promises to 'define the Quebec nation,' but rather than describe a dynamic, multilingual society within a majority Francophone province, it entrenches its three most narrow-minded pieces of legislation – Bill 21 on secularism, Bill 84 on identity, and Bill 96 on language – outside challenges of the courts, so their privileged place in this 'Constitution' protects them from judicial appeal."

"This bill places collective rights, secularism and the French language above human rights," they continue. "It also prevents the use of taxpayers' dollars for court challenges, a fundamental undermining of democratic principles that any party should be able to challenge any unfair law."

The Task Force noted that in Quebec, "scholars and premiers, both independentist and federalist, have advocated for a written Quebec Constitution to underline its autonomy and difference. However, the Liberals, Parti Québécois and Québec solidaire all voted against tabling the bill."

The Task Force noted that the Barreau du Québec has also criticized Bill 1. "It is time this legislation



The Task Force on Linguistic Policy's Andrew Caddell.

be shelved, amended enormously or thrown in the recycling bin, where it belongs," they said.

'Dangerous, unconstitutional'

Recommending changes, the Task Force said it "sees this bill as dangerous, unconstitutional and inconsistent with the Constitution of Canada and its Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Any and all sections that are beyond the reach of the National Assembly should be withdrawn."

"The Task Force, as a representative of the 1.25 million English-speaking Quebecers, demands recognition of the non-francophone community as builders, leaders, scientists, doctors, and enormous contributors to the growth of Quebec for the last three centuries," they continued.

"A chapter of the law should be dedicated to this recognition. If not, this legislation creates a structure of a purely ethnocentric 'nation,' comparable to a 19th century nation-state, and not a dynamic, open society of the 21st century."

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New Laurentides podcast series gives men the microphone on mental well-being

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The conversation around men's mental health in the Laurentides is getting a meaningful new platform this week, as the CISSS des Laurentides launches a podcast series that invites men to speak openly about the pressures they face and the ways they cope with them. Released on November 19 to mark both International Men's Day and the twelfth annual Quebec Men's Health and Well-Being Day, the series is titled Éclaire-moi... La parole aux hommes. It aims to highlight the realities of masculine well-being through authentic conversa-

tions with men of different ages and backgrounds.

The initiative comes from the region's Réseau d'éclaireurs en santé psychologique, a network that has been steadily expanding its outreach in recent years. By adding a podcast format, the CISSS des Laurentides hopes to reach men who may not seek support in traditional ways, yet are living with stress, emotional pressure, or a sense of isolation that often goes unspoken.

Throughout the episodes, participants open up about how they handle stress, what helps them decompress after demanding days, and how they build meaningful connections with other men. Many of them underscore the simple yet profound

impact that talking to one another can have, especially at a time when many men still feel hesitant to express vulnerability.

The project is earning praise inside the organization itself. Benoît Major, the assistant president and CEO of the CISSS des Laurentides, described the episodes as honest and moving. He noted that the discussions provide a rare window into the emotional lives of men and serve as a reminder that conversations about mental health should never be limited by stigma. He also emphasized the innovative spirit of the Réseau d'éclaireurs, a group he credits with helping improve the psychological well-being of the Laurentides population.

The episodes are now available on the CISSS website under the Balados du CISSS des Laurentides section, and they can also be streamed on Spotify. The format is designed to be accessible, allowing listeners to tune in wherever they are, whether during a commute along Highway 15 or at home after a long day of work.

The timing of the launch is not accidental. Both International Men's Day and Quebec's annual day dedicated to male health aim to shed light on issues

that men often keep to themselves. Mental health workers in the region say that many men wait too long before asking for help, either because they do not recognize the signs of stress fatigue or because they fear burdening those around them. Initiatives like this podcast, they argue, help normalize the idea that asking for support is not a weakness, but a strength.

For those who may need immediate guidance, the CISSS reminds the public that Info Social professionals are available at all hours through the 811 option 2 service. The line connects callers to qualified psychosocial workers who can offer support, information, and referrals, day or night.

By handing the microphone to men from different walks of life, the CISSS des Laurentides is attempting to expand the regional conversation about emotional health, community, and resilience. The voices captured in the podcast are varied, but the message they share is consistent. Speaking openly matters. Listening to one another matters too. For many men across the Laurentides, this new series may be the spark that encourages them to take that first step.



PSYCHOLOGY FOR ALL

Emmanuel Aliatas, MA, Psychologist emmanuelaliatas@gmail.com

Holiday Stress/Anxiety

It's time for "Holiday Anxiety" to start. We have entered the holiday season, and one must think of what is ahead regarding the gatherings of family and friends. Most people have learned the best way to eliminate anxiety during the holiday is just to go away. I think that is a great idea. When travel is not an option, I will try to take you into the holiday season with a smooth landing.

One of the major causes of holiday anxiety has to be social pressure. Having family and friends over to celebrate can get thorny at times especially if topics like religion or politics are brought up. Furthermore, these are the two topics that I would advise people to avoid during their get togethers.

Another cause is the financial aspect of gift giving and hosting. This financial aspect can add up quickly. We all know the cliché of people paying off their holiday credit cards by spring. Given our economy and credit card interest rates, this can be a scary thought.

There is also the grief and loneliness aspect of the holidays. People should be aware of this and make sure they are not alone and isolating. Better to be with people than to be alone. Exercise may help elevate your mood and help stabilize your sleeping patterns if you are having difficulty with sleep.

There are many more anxieties one may face during the holidays; however, I will not go over an exhaustive list. I am sure everybody knows what I am talking about. I am quite certain many people have endured holiday anxiety, and it is not pleasant.

One way to overcome this is to be well prepared and not to seek perfection. Nobody

expects it from you. I have witnessed many times in my family people ask; How is the turkey? Is the meat tough? Is it dry? Are the cookies good or did they need more sugar? How is the cake? Does it have enough syrup? Things that are not as important as the gathering itself.

This above, is the most anxiety provoking event during the holidays. The expectation that everything will be perfect is unrealistic. Please get that out of your minds and set realistic expectations. Most of us expect to see people they do not see every day and just catch up. That's how it is in our society right now. They will most likely be discussing the state of the economy more than anything else. The price of groceries and gas as well as the price of putting their kids into activities afterschool. The actual cost of raising children and getting them through school has become difficult for most in our economic times.

I really can not end this article without mentioning the state of our economy at this time. Given the anxiety caused by an unstable and uncertain economy one must set realistic goals. For example, do not overspend on your credit cards, prioritize your shopping in a manageable way and make sure you can keep your expenses at a comfortable level for yourself. Do not compare yourself to others.

Finally, I would advise people to practice grounding and mindfulness. Your mental health depends on it. Do not forget to hydrate, get enough exercise and good quality sleep. I hope I have been helpful and that you may benefit from reading this article. I wish everyone a happy, healthy and safe holiday season.



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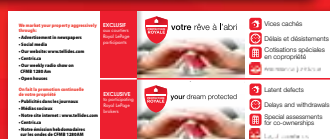
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DIRECT ANSWERS

FROM WAYNE & TAMARA

LET HIM LEAD

Q I ended my marriage after 15 years. I've been separated for five years and haven't dated anyone. I really had no interest in dating. In July I met the father of my son's friend. He, too, is separated and has been for four years. In his case his wife ended the marriage. He was devastated. He indicated at one time he could never go through that again. His son lives with him, and since the boys are together all the time, we talk often. We've become good friends and enjoy talking to each other. I'm becoming attracted to him. He has all the qualities I look for. He has a wonderful personality, a sense of humor, and a closeness to his family. He is interesting and kind. I find it hard to decide if he is attracted to me but afraid of getting involved with anyone, or not attracted to me at all. We have not yet gone on a date. He did invite my two boys and me to his camp this summer for the day, and had the boys and I to his camp for Thanksgiving dinner with some of his family. While talking to him the next day, I told him the boys had a great time, and he asked if I had as well. I've invited him to my office Christmas party, which he accepted. It is a large event with dinner and dancing. This will be the first time we will be

out alone. What should I look for to determine his feelings toward me?

Elaine

A Elaine, don't make a problem which doesn't exist. A relationship between the two of you has been slowly building. You understand his fears and concerns. So how do you address that? By letting him lead. If you force the relationship, he will feel threatened. When he senses this is a relationship he wants, he will move forward on his own unless he sees you only as a friend and the parent of his son's friend. Since there is no problem here—you are not dating him—act like a single, available woman. Imagine you are a fisherman. There is a big trout in the water and you'd love to land him, but all you can do is throw your lure out there. You can't make the fish bite, but there are other fish in the stream. Making yourself available will make you less disheartened and desperate about this one fish. The more you try to force your lure on a fish, the greater the chance you will scare it off. Be relaxed, patient, and open to all possible relationships. Not only does that give you the greatest chance for success, it creates a desirable aura around you—the kind of aura which will attract others, including this man, to you.

Wayne & Tamara

APPROACHING STORM

Q After 10 years of marriage is it settling to be with someone who says they love you but aren't in love with you? What if that person thinks being "in love" is a childish fantasy and grownups don't need to be "in love" to have a happy marriage? Is being "in love" really that important?

Kim

A Kim, let us assume the person who says this is your husband. Then the question for him is, how do you keep sailing once you've thrown out the star which guides

you? What is the foundation of your captaincy? Financial security? Personal advantage? Convenience?

Circumstances change. Sickness, a business failure, or an ill wind can alter any of the reasons for being together. So can unexpected success. But love holds people together both on calm seas and when things get rough. Without love you have to keep changing why your contract should still be valid.

A marriage without love is like sailing in the Bermuda Triangle. At any time one of you might disappear forever.

Wayne & Tamara

WAYNE & TAMARA MITCHELL are the authors of YOUR OTHER HALF (www.yourotherhalf.com)

Send letters to: Direct Answers, PO 964 Springfield, MO 65801-0964

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Canadian physicians say Bill 26 and Bill 2 are undermining healthcare in Canada

OKSANA KISHCHUK

The results below are from Physician Pulse, a joint initiative of Abacus Data and the Canadian Medical Association surveying physicians across the country. The survey was completed by 447 physicians between November 11th-17th 2025.

Physicians are watching closely

Physicians across Canada are paying very close attention to the recent political developments shaping their work. According to our first wave of Physician Pulse, 84% of physicians say they are following government actions that affect the profession such as Alberta's Bill 26 and Quebec's Bill 2 either very or somewhat closely. In provinces at the centre of these debates, attention is nearly universal: 87% of physicians in Alberta and 98% in Quebec report they are following the issue.

This level of attentiveness is striking but not surprising. Physicians sit at the intersection of clinical care and public policy; when govern-

ments shift the rules governing their work, they feel the consequences first. The data makes clear that physicians understand the stakes and they're watching because what happens next will shape how they practice and how Canadians receive care.

They are experiencing, and predict, serious consequences

Beneath this heightened attention lies deep concern. The first wave of Physician Pulse reveals a profession that feels increasingly strained, undervalued, and anxious about what new policies will mean for themselves and their patients.

Almost half of physicians (43%) say they do not feel trusted or respected by their provincial government. For a workforce already dealing with system-level pressures, this trust gap has meaningful consequences for morale, retention, and long-term system sustainability. The picture worsens in the provinces directly affected by the legislation: 76% of Alberta physicians and

84% of Quebec physicians say they do not feel trusted or respected. Among physicians in Quebec- 70% do not feel trusted by governments at all.

Physicians also foresee ripple effects that extend well beyond their own experience. Eight in ten (80%) believe that growing government oversight of medical practice will make it harder to recruit and retain physicians in their province. Recruitment and retention are foundational to access. If the workforce becomes harder to maintain, there are serious reasons to believe patients will feel it too.

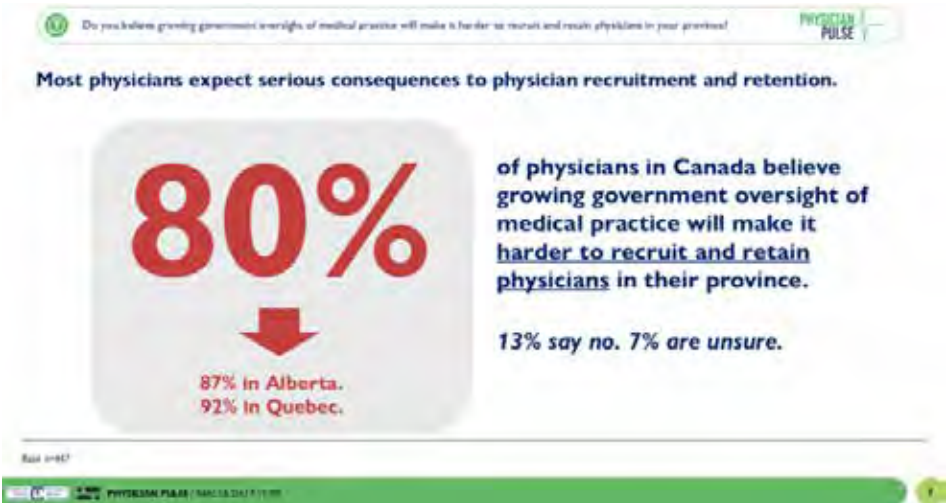
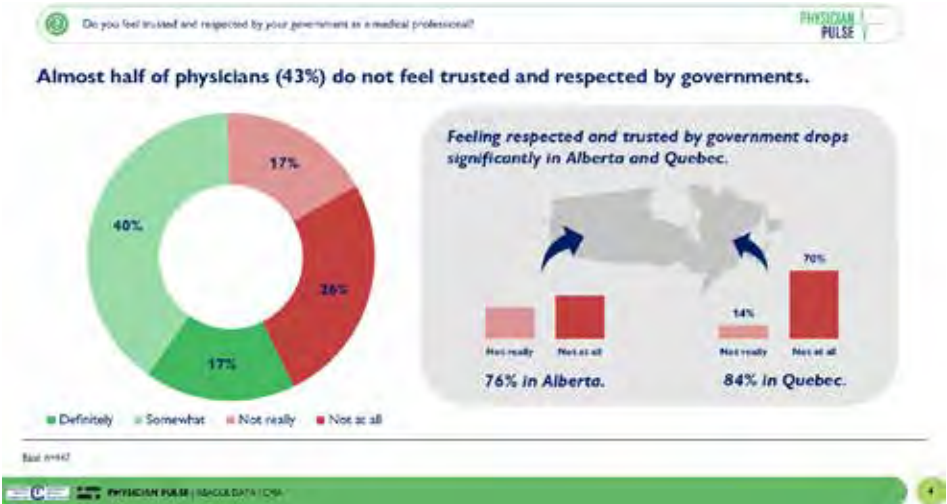
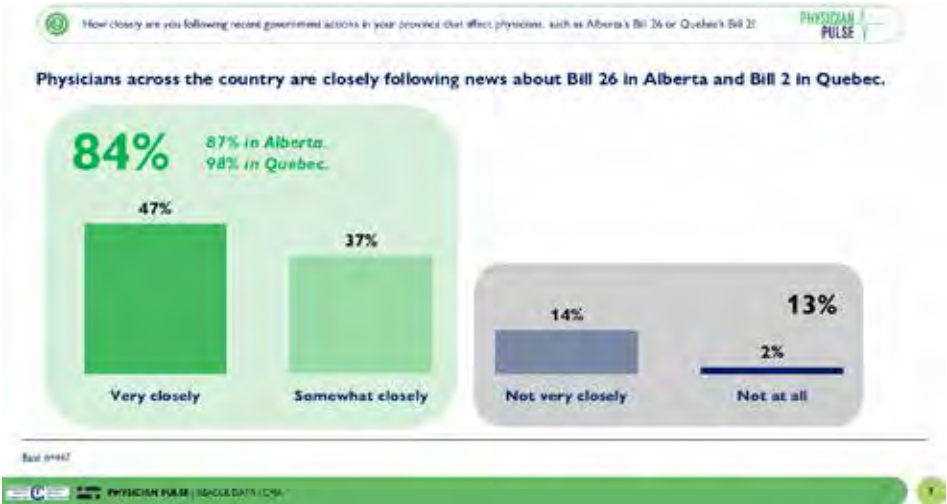
When asked about the direct consequences for care, physicians once again express serious worry. Two-thirds (66%) say these political decisions will worsen the quality-of-care patients receive. Only 13% believe such decisions will improve care. The message is clear: physicians see these changes not as incremental adjustments, but as decisions that could reshape how care is delivered in ways that leave patients worse off.

The issue is especially pressing in provinces directly impacted

While physicians across Canada express concern, the intensity of these views is much stronger in Alberta and Quebec where government decisions are prompting direct and immediate changes to the practice environment.

Physicians in these provinces are more likely to feel disrespected by government, more convinced that recruitment and retention will suffer, and more worried about the future quality of patient care. In both provinces, the numbers consistently show a sharper sense of risk and a deeper urgency for action.

These findings underline a national story with provincial hotspots: physicians everywhere are uneasy, but those working under new developments are signaling alarm. For policymakers, health-system leaders, and the public, these early results from Physician Pulse offer a clear takeaway; what happens in Alberta and Quebec could foreshadow broader challenges elsewhere if the underlying issues aren't addressed.



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The luckiest signs this week:
VIRGO, LIBRA AND SCORPIO



ARIES

When your boss goes on holiday, you'll have the chance to step up and replace them. This opportunity will mark a positive turning point in your career. If you feel like you're lacking affection in your relationship, be mindful that love can fade over time.



TAURUS

You may find yourself in the spotlight this week for one reason or another. You'll also have a chance to lend a sympathetic ear to someone in need, which will earn you their heartfelt gratitude.



GEMINI

You'll spend freely to spoil your loved ones, and this generosity will make you feel like a good person. However, you'll need to think carefully before making a decision about a family project.



CANCER

Despite being busy at work, making time for yourself is essential. Don't shy away from moments of relaxation and fun with your loved ones. Accept their invitations to go out and try new things.



LEO

You'll receive a sum of money that will allow you to treat yourself. Whether you want to buy real estate or start a business, you'll finally be able to finance your project.



VIRGO

This week, you'll start sending out invitations for holiday parties. You'll be pleasantly surprised by the many positive responses you receive. If you're an artist, inspiration will strike, allowing you to create something truly unique.



LIBRA

Your artistic potential will blossom. Be sure to jot down your ideas so you don't forget them. This way, you can bring them to life one day instead of letting them fall by the wayside.



SCORPIO

You'll receive numerous invitations to go out, which you'll gladly accept. Although this may sometimes feel overwhelming, remember to take breaks and recharge when you feel the need.



SAGITTARIUS

If you want to celebrate the holidays in a special way, planning ahead is important. Time is running out, but the results will exceed your expectations. In your love life, remember that small acts of kindness can really help your relationship grow strong and go the distance.



CAPRICORN

It's time to step out of your comfort zone and embrace new adventures. The new year will bring opportunities for you to explore fresh perspectives. By signing up for a training course, you will open the door to rewarding opportunities.



AQUARIUS

A particular person or situation will deeply move you this week. The changes you make at work will yield positive outcomes. If you're single, love may unexpectedly come your way, taking you by surprise.



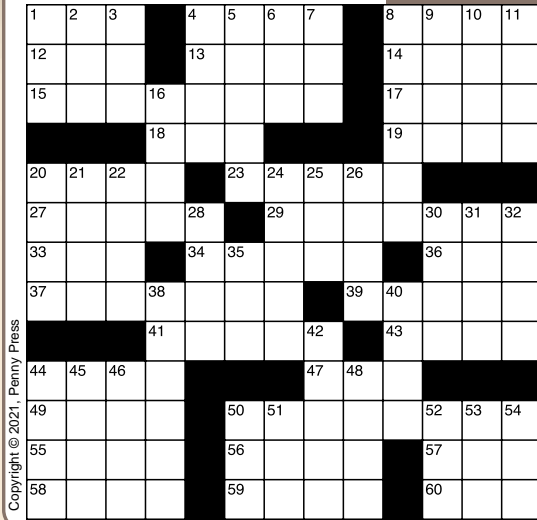
PISCES

Your colleagues will enjoy working with you because you're not afraid to tackle challenges or step up and take initiative in organizing upcoming events. However, family tensions could throw everything out of balance.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 293



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ACROSS

1. Dangerous curve
4. Send a letter
8. Silly
12. Gab
13. Hand-cream ingredi-ent
14. Peer
15. Living
17. Verb's counterpart
18. "___ Me No Ques-tions"
19. Matured
20. Catch
23. Emit
27. Sultan's wives
29. By this time
33. Picnic invader
34. Granny Smith, e.g.
36. Pigeon's cry
37. Lash enhancer
39. Be anxious
41. Amid
43. Audition tape

DOWN

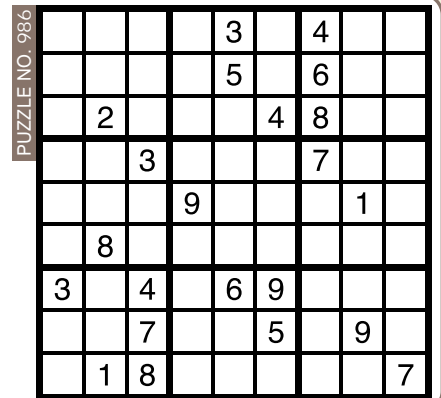
1. Peeper
2. Jazz instrument
3. Use snow runners
4. Gym pads
5. Identical
6. Electrified particle
7. Shake a ___
8. Give away
9. Full of excitement
10. Chimney part
11. See (to)
44. Politician Gingrich
47. Highest card
49. Yoked animals
50. Detoured around
55. Prima donna
56. Marsh plant
57. Building vine
58. Dance part
59. Ifs, ___, or buts
60. Good grade
16. Wise man
20. Counterfeit
21. Mom's mom
22. Martial ___
24. Tokyo's site
25. House extension
26. Ship's men
28. Form of address
30. Land unit
31. College residence
32. Stringed toy: hyph.
35. Authority
38. Brief snooze
40. Works by Keats
42. Stared
44. Dozes
45. Leave
46. "___ Got Tonight"
48. Creeps
50. Bathing-suit top
51. Yearning
52. Bro or sis
53. First female
54. Coloring agent

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY:

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.

Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember: You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.

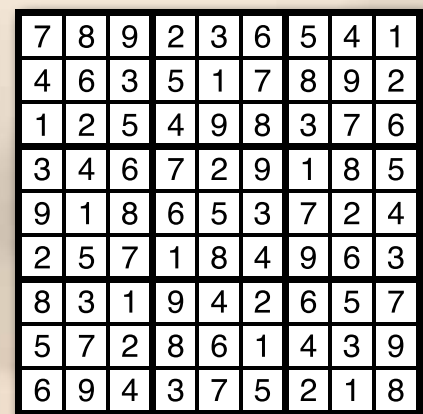


Last Issue's Answers

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- Grapefruit
- Bananas (4)
- Carrots (2lbs bag)
- Lemons (2)
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- Potatoes (~3lbs)
- Leek
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