

Bill 41 is ?truly transforming? Patients First ? helping doctors serve us better

Dr. Constance Weicker's letter (Citizen, Nov. 10) presents a limited perspective on how physicians can play a stronger role in our health care system under the Patients First Act.

Unfortunately, she uses fear of privacy violations and increased administration as her reasons for being against a bill that will bring together the many players in our health care to focus on the needs of patients. Health care costs us more than \$52 million a year and requires reform to make it responsive and effective.

Dr. David Price, a physician leader and as the chair of panel members of the Primary Health Care Expert Advisory Committee, called for primary care providers to be better integrated, not just among themselves, but also within the health care system at the local level. This is the purpose of Patients First. Among other changes, it allows planning and delivery of our health care services to bring family physician into the planning and integrated delivery of local health services. The success in the long term depends on all aspects of health care, especially doctors, being part of planning and service management. Medicine is an essential and vital part of our health care, but only one part of what is necessary for health in our society.

Local Health Integration Networks (LHIN), while being limited in their authority in their first decades, have shown service and cost efficiencies in the sectors in which they have been involved ? hospitals, long-term care and community services. But without the essential services of primary care and public health, major aspects of our health care have not been always included. The Patients First Act does this, and through making sub-regions as focus points for local planning and performance monitoring, it will allow providers to make the individual patients the centre of health.

There are many other positive aspects of this new bill and I encourage everyone to them explore further. Through my 50 years of involvement with human services delivery, the Patients First Act is one of the few truly transforming actions that I have seen taken by government.

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