

Hostages in our own Homes

by SHERALYN ROMAN

We are all being held hostage in our own homes at this point with no negotiator on the way to help arrange for our release. There's no Stockholm Syndrome anymore, if there ever was, and schools are once again being shuttered. There is vaccine confusion, lack of delivery, skyrocketing case counts, promises galore but follow through on those promises - not so much. We have seniors who are not being allowed outside their building to enjoy the open-roof, perfectly safe courtyard, vaccine hesitancy amongst those actually eligible to receive it, and the list goes on. We're not to gather, not to shop, not to do anything and even if we could go somewhere, where would we go? It's a hostage crisis that even CNN is covering on American news networks and there's no end in sight. We're essentially being held hostage in our own homes.

At the beginning of this pandemic, with the exception of a few naysayers, most of us understood the danger of COVID-19 and supported efforts to keep us all safe. We trusted our government officials who appeared daily with important updates on how they would support Canadians. Because we knew little about the ramifications of contracting COVID-19, we believed what we were told. Stockholm Syndrome might be a strong comparator but we agreed, willingly, to "Stay Home and Stay Safe."

Now however, after more than a full year, with numbers escalating while we watch with the continued mismanagement of everything from school closures, to not closing big box retailers, to vaccine delivery failures, with increasing anger, we're tired.

Every decision made for the sake of the economy has undermined our health and everything done to protect our health has clearly not been enough - or at very least, was not done SOON enough.

Trust is eroding and rightfully so. When announcements are made about an upcoming announcement at which the government will make an announcement, we're tuning out - not in.

When Stephen Lecce announces schools are safe and sends a letter home to parents that they will NOT be closed and the VERY NEXT DAY announces schools will be closed - this has all just become a tragic comedy of epic proportions.

During the Monday, April 12 news conference, we finally, and happily, detected a certain "tone" in the various questions being asked about the sudden change in direction on school closures. Too bad Lecce just looked like a deer in the headlights when it came to answers.

No wonder no one trusts the government anymore. Numbers are skyrocketing even though personal services are clearly not contributing to the problem, nor are small retailers and restaurants. So, where are people now contracting COVID-19 and the variants of concern if we are all being held hostage in our own homes? It couldn't possibly be at school could it? Or in large workplaces or the big box stores the finally (partially) closed?

To address this latest crisis head-on, we're now being told that hotspots will get extra care and attention. Vaccines are "getting into arms" faster than ever before and age limits have been lowered. Pop-up vaccine clinics will be open any day now. It seems someone forgot to tell the Region of Peel vaccine booking system, however, and it's been a running game of cat and mouse attempting to book appointments.

I'm in a hot spot, of eligible age and members of my household meet certain other eligibility criteria yet despite repeated attempts by all five of us, only three have been able to secure an actual appointment. Meanwhile, some people I know have easily jumped in line while we wait for a specific medical form that last week was "required" and this week apparently is not! Talk about the left hand having no clue what the right hand is doing!

How did all of this happen? How is it that what was clearly plain for all to see; such as fast, efficient vaccination efforts in hotspots,

at places of business, and so many other measures we could discuss (closing the airport last year for a few weeks comes to mind) were not implemented sooner? This isn't armchair quarterbacking or 20/20 hindsight. We've had over a year to figure this out and our medical doctors and science table advisors have been telling us all along this would happen. We watched it happen in other countries. Did we learn nothing?

I honestly think Ticketmaster could have done a better job of organizing the online registration process for vaccine rollout and either UPS or Amazon a better job at getting the vaccines actually delivered on time. Meantime, here we sit, hostages in our own homes, waiting?.for what exactly? Another announcement about an announcement being announced soon? Stay tuned. I think not.