

To: Dr. Paul Sawchuck, MD, MBA, CCFP, FCFP, President, CCFP

Re: CCFP support of a political lobby group

Date: 20190215

Greetings,

By now you have heard of the latest group of doctors who insist on opining well outside their area of expertise:

Doctors for Protection from Guns

<https://www.facebook.com/DoctorsforProtectionfromGuns/photos/a.2330058970340128/2340447115967980/?type=1&theater>

What you may not be aware of is this group has claimed unqualified support from your organization.

These misguided souls need to try doing some unbiased research into the actual risks of various activities and the performance of laws surrounding those activities, rather than just spouting the usual knee-jerk sound bytes. (Hint: Lawful shooting sports and activities are the safest of all pastimes in Canada. Safer than golf and pleasure walking).

If they must adopt the spurious "Bullet as a pathogen" model, then why not apply the same standards of analysis as we do to other illnesses and their proposed treatments?

NNT and NNH and performance outcomes are abysmal for past and present gun laws that only target inanimate objects and Canada's most lawful and safest community, the Law Abiding Gun Owner (LAGO), while at the same time ignoring the violent criminals.

Just to run the numbers, back in the heyday of the federal long gun registry (LGR), Wendy Cukier and Heidi Rathgen via their 2-person Coalition for Gun Control spuriously claimed that the LGR was responsible for a pre-existing downward trend in the murder rate, and therefore saved 35 lives per year. Even though this claim is demonstrably false, lets just use this number to calculate NNTs. They also claimed that the 21,000 queries per day on the data base were evidence of utility rather than automated busywork that wasted resources, but we will also use this number.

In order to "save" one life, you have to license 2.2 million LAGOs.  $NNT = 62,857$ .

In order to "save" one life, you have to query the data base 21,000 X 365 times.  $NNT = 219,000$ .

In order to "save" one life, you have to register 21 million guns.  $NNT = 600,000$ .

Now we all know that NNT is not the be-all and end-all of program utility, but really once it gets above 10, we tend to scrap the proposed treatment and look for better ways to spend money.

There is ample evidence to show that pretty much all of Canada's firearms laws suffer from the same fatal flaws of being symbolic rather than effective.

Unfortunately, and as mentioned above, this latest lobby group claims to have the unqualified support of CCFP. As a dues-paying member, I do not agree with such a stance and I expect my representatives to take an evidence-based approach to public policy.

Believe-it-or-not, we LAGOs share this group's stated goal of reducing violence and saving lives. Unfortunately, there are many whose religiously-held world view is that anything that impairs LAGOs' access to and enjoyment of our sporting and defensive equipment will somehow magically reduce violent acts by people who have nothing in common with us. This attitude is hardly conducive to finding effective solutions to violence.

LAGOs are the absolute safest and most lawful of all Canadians, 1/3 as likely as a non gun owner and 1/2 as likely as a cop to ever be the perpetrator of illegal violence. Yes, you heard that right: LAGOs murder, rob and rape at 1/2 the rate of cops (incidents per 100,000 per year), and we have no problem with cops being armed in public. What then is the problem with LAGOs keeping firearms at our homes and ranges?

What if some lobby group decided to take a similar approach and attack legitimate doctors in Canada? Not the quacks and charlatans, mind you, but only us lawful MDs. This is what it would look like:

There were 84,000 doctors in Canada in 2016.

There are between 30 and 60 thousand deaths annually due to medical error and hospital acquired infections. Let's take the median 45 thousand.

Therefore, there are 0.53 preventable deaths per physician per year in Canada.

Let's compare to gun owners.

There are 2.2 million LAGOs in Canada. We know that most murderers are not LAGOs and that suicidal people just switch methods in the absence of guns, so we should really only deal with accidental deaths. There are about 20 accidental shooting deaths each year giving a rate of 0.00001 per LAGO per year.

Even if we lumped in all the murders and suicides and rounded way up from the 2011 figures of just under 700 to more than double that and used 1500, that still only gives 0.0007 deaths per LAGO per year.

It would take LAGOs 53,000 years to accidentally kill as many people as doctors do in a year on a per capita basis. Even if you falsely assume that LAGOs are responsible for the murders and suicides, they would still take more than 750 years to kill as many people as doctors do in a year.

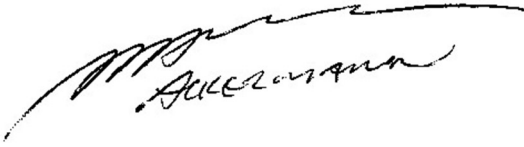
Somewhere I read about a mote in one eye and a plank in another.

As always, we LAGOs remain willing to work with any government or private agency to make evidence-based laws that are regularly audited for performance, and whose effect is violence reduction.

What we are not willing to do is acquiesce to shameful demonization, marginalization and eradication by ideological zealots whose actions (attacking Canada's safest people) belie their words (seeking to reduce violence).

Please clarify your stance at the earliest opportunity with an evidence-based public statement.

Thank you for your attention.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M.J. Ackermann". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping horizontal line above the name.

--

M.J. Ackermann, MD (Mike)  
Rural Family Physician,

[Redacted contact information]

[Redacted contact information]

"Hope for the best, but be prepared for the worst".

\*\* Please always use BCC and erase appended address lists when forwarding or sending to groups \*\*