



- SERGE J. TAILLON, CIHI COLUMNIST -

"As Canadian as possible... under the circumstances"

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Recently, this nation and its people mourned over the loss of one of its icons. We will miss Peter Gzowski, the individual and broadcaster ~ our friend ~ his inquisitive mind, his insights and thought provoking questions.

Many of you will recall Peter's keynote address at INFOCUS two years ago. He spoke passionately about our health care system and the need to ensure access to quality care for all. He noted that health



Peter Gzowski

technology and information are part of the solution and encouraged us to persevere while at the same time cautioning about the risk of intrusion of individual privacy. Similarly, while marvelling over advances in gene therapy research, Peter also cautioned that "just because we can, doesn't necessarily mean we ought to."

I wonder how Peter would react to the current situation...the many commissions, the changing landscape of service delivery often times linked

to the downsizing of budgets and, of course, the growing expectations of Canadians. I suspect he would agree with our Board Chair, Michael Decter, that better health information will be key in paving the way for a quality sustainable health system that will meet the needs and expectations of Canadians. In November, Michael wrote:

- policy-makers need better insight to allocate dollars among competing demands

- managers need better information to direct people and finances in the most effective manner
- clinicians need better information to achieve better outcomes, and
- patients need information to better understand their care choices and participate in the management of their own health.

Over the last few months, we have met with many of our colleagues to tell them about our plans but also to hear about their day-to-day challenges and their needs. This process confirmed our Board Chair's perspective and underscored the fact that people understand and agree that "good information is key to good decision making." As well, most people agree that we need to make the necessary investments in improving our data and our understanding of key issues. Their dilemma, of course, is to *allow* themselves to proceed at this time.

I suspect Peter Gzowski would say that this is typical Canadian behaviour... "as Canadian as possible...under the circumstances."



Editor's Note:

Due to a typographical error, "the inteRAI's Canadian centre" should have read "The Canadian Collaborating Centre - interRAI Providence Centre" in Mr. Taillon's column in Volume 15, #5; page 21.

MAPPING THE CANADIAN STANDARDS LANDSCAPE

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