

What about Ralph?

All of a sudden there is a tsunami of agreement sweeping through impressive numbers of querulous politicians with aspirations to a full-face *Life* magazine cover, multinational business leaders, and really rich people in the western world that Gaia just might be getting warmer. Following on what had been mostly regarded as the deranged conclusions of a small group of unimportant science nerds a few years ago, these people coming to the sudden realization that it is *de rigueur* to be way over on the side of Al Gore's "save this house" movement.

Isn't it wonderful that even though a host of very smart scientists (from virtually every country with smart scientists) have been warning of global

warming for a decade or so, it took a politician and a documentary film producer to create some general understanding (and political acceptance) of the ecological mess we are about to hand off to our grandchildren.

It seems to me that we in the medical business should take the sudden turnaround in political and business attitudes to global warming as an example of how to get our message across to Canada's politicians and ideologues. I don't think that doctors have been totally ineffective in their attempts to alert everyone to the impending implosion in publicly funded health care. It's just that the message inevitably gets drowned out by the cacophony of misguided political correctness that quickly finds itself front

and centre on the six o'clock news or on the front page of the country's major newspapers the instant someone whispers "do you think we need to change medicare?"

However, what if the message was delivered by a respected Canadian political leader who no longer has aspirations to be the PM (I'm trying mightily to think of some names but my deadline is rapidly approaching and the only ones I can come up with unfortunately all belong to dead politicians). I think the big stumbling block for me is the term "respected," but I would be open to any suggestions from the readership as I'm sure my inability to think of a candidate is just another reflection of my longstanding political naiveté. I visualize such a message being delivered in warm stenorian tones by one of our national icons (George Stroumboulopoulos?) in the same Al Gore-type documentary format that worked so well for the global warming movement in the US. In Canada we have a number of well-known filmmakers, and James Cameron's name comes to mind. The fact that his biggest success was for a movie about a really big boat and an iceberg sums up the collision course our health care system is on.

Once we have the right messenger, the message will suddenly become cool, and legions of Canada's US-based glitterati will jump on the politically correct bandwagon of medicare change. Imagine if Pamela Anderson, Michael Buble, Steve Nash, Wayne Gretzky, and Justin Morneau all decided to join the "let's change medicare" refrain. There's no telling how quickly the fever of medicare change would sweep across the country.

I just thought of a name: what about Ralph Klein?

—JAW

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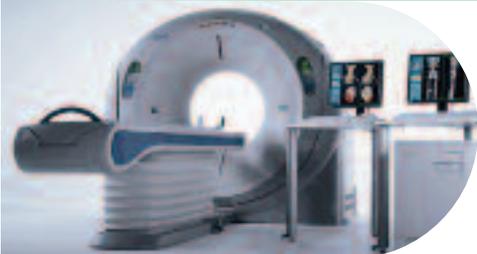
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