



Sustainability: A Long-Term Strategy

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What is CPRN?

- A policy research think tank dedicated to help make Canada a more just, prosperous and caring society
- We work on:
 - The cusp of economic and social
 - The perspective of communities, families, employers, governments, and citizens, and
 - With many disciplines: economics, sociology, political science, geography, law
- Best insights are where the disciplines meet



Why Sustainability?

- Canadians can muddle through mine fields of politics, intergovernmental relations, global pressures and public expectations
- Focus is usually short term – this week, this quarter, this year, this electoral term
- This conference pushes us into unfamiliar territory – the long term
- Who better than Bruce Little to give us the push?



What is Sustainability?

Making decisions that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs

- It's an ethical perspective
- An ECC colleague once said: "Why should I worry about future generations? What have they done for me?"
- My message is that we have no pre-ordained right to consume the future



An Economic Example

- Goldman Sachs* has made 50-year projections of GDP. They show Brazil, Russia India and China as dominant global economies
- Compels North Americans to think differently
 - About their pre-eminent role in the world today
 - About our relationships with those countries
- For me, it also emphasizes the power we have to influence the local issues that govern our quality of life

(Dreaming with Bric's, October, 2003)



Two Social Examples

- An ageing society

This is a society in which all ages are respected and able to fully participate

- An efficient health care system

This is a system that serves citizens well and keeps them well

- Today, I will talk about both of them



An Ageing Society

- Does not fit the life model of today:
 - 30 years of childhood and education investment
 - 25 years of intense work and child rearing
 - Freedom 55!
 - 25 years of healthy ageing
 - After 80: increasing dependency
- Is this sustainable in economic terms? No
- Does it make sense in social and creative life?
- No, of course not



Some Flaws in the Model

- Education should be life long – 0-75
- Intense work and child-rearing are in conflict
- Pensions and caregivers can't support such long periods of retirement
- Poor people don't get a chance to join the model
- Risk in 20 years: Not enough working people aged 30-55 to keep the economy producing services for all other ages



What Will Change the Model?

- Gen X'ers don't believe in this model of work.
 - They want work-life balance from day one
 - They will rebel against paying more taxes, getting less, working more
- Skills shortages in selected areas will force employers (and regulators) to change
 - To increase labour supply and make pension systems more sustainable
- Preventive action today will make the change in the life model easier and more acceptable



A New Life Pattern?

- Some of the changes that make sense
- High quality early learning systems
- A better mix of work and learning in our 20s
- Time out for parenting
- Better pay and working conditions for caregivers
- A longer, but less intense working
- Graduated retirement
 - Why doesn't Bruce write a Globe column every second week? Or six months a year?



Sustainable Health Care

- The current model is to drain money out of every other priority to keep health care going
 - Education, infrastructure, social services, defense, foreign aid, all lose out
 - Not sustainable
- What will slow the juggernaut down?
- In a word: supply chain management – a business term for managing complex systems efficiently



Health Care Supply Chain

- Upstream: Living conditions, environment, lifestyles, etc. – determinants of health - QOL
- Mainstream: Treating illness efficiently and humanely from diagnosis to cure or chronic care
- Downstream: Effective social care for chronic illness and dependency due to disability
- Now, all the burden goes into Mainstream due to lack of complementary services (lower cost)
 - Takes 20 years to build those systems



What Will Change the Balance?

- Younger docs don't want to work like their predecessors
- Inability of working population to provide essential caregiving
- Evidence of effectiveness of Upstream and Downstream in other countries
- Competitiveness pressures
- Other?



Some Hopeful Signs

- Primary care reform: Momentum may now be building. Supports all three stages of supply chain
- Wait list management: Local success stories in streamlining the care path in surgical, medical and chronic care services
- These systems are not made by First Ministers. They are built by local champions, supported by necessary infrastructure
 - They deliver more for less wait time and money
 - They make communities more liveable



Upstream – Quality of Life

Requires two pieces:

1. A robust public health system for prevention and early identification

- Major weaknesses in the SARS outbreak
- Now slowly being rebuilt

2. Liveable communities:

- Think holistically about transit, housing, work, schools, innovation, clean air and water, etc.
- Easier for elders to live independently
- Easier (healthier) for work - life balance



Sustainability Matters

- Sustainability issues are important and urgent
- Our communities are becoming less liveable
- Quality of health care is not what it should be
- The ageing society is upon us
- But we have time to react, to make Canada an example for the world about how small countries can cope
- If we wait for the market to make it happen, it will cost more and there will be losers



The Policy Paradox

- There is no crisis to provoke an FMM and announce a Ten Year Plan for \$42 billion
- No impetus to build a partnership with the private and non-profit sectors
- We will muddle along
- Yet: Our greatest gift to future generations and to ourselves would be to begin to build the Canada we want – older but better





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