

10 health stories that mattered: Oct. 4–10

- Marijuana should be legal and regulated with a focus on health risks, like alcohol and tobacco, according to a cannabis-policy framework released by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Criminalization only heightens the risks associated with cannabis use, states the framework, which notes that the centre does not consider this a moral issue and isn't encouraging marijuana use.
- To further safeguard against importing Ebola, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) will begin using "targeted temperature screening," according to a statement from Dr. Gregory Taylor, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada. Travellers from countries affected by the virus who notify a CBSA officer that they are ill or have been in contact with an ill person will be directed to quarantine officers for a temperature check and health assessment.
- Most Canadians (84%) believe doctors should be permitted to assist in ending the lives of competent adults who are terminally ill, suffering unbearably and repeatedly asking for assistance in dying, states an Ipsos poll of 2515 people commissioned by Dying with Dignity. Support was highest in Nova Scotia (89%) and lowest in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (79%).
- Most emergency department visits (90%) don't last more than 7.5 hours, according to data from the Canadian Institute for Health Information. Patients who are admitted to hospital from emergency departments often spend much more time in emergency as they wait for an inpatient bed; 10% wait more than 28 hours.
- Ontario Minister of Health Dr. Eric Hoskins is planning to increase transparency in the province's health system by demanding that all public health units and self-regulatory health colleges make their investigation and inspection reports publicly available. Hoskins also plans to amend the Ontario Public Health Standards to require mandatory reporting of these reports.
- Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada shared a grade of C– for their communication and media policies concerning access to scientists. In a report called *Can Scientists Speak?* from Evidence for Democracy in Ottawa and Simon Fraser University, in Burnaby, BC, about 85% of federal government departments earned grades of C or lower, based on factors such as openness of communication with media, protection from political interference and rights to free speech.
- Canada's first research chair for suicide prevention will be created at the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre, a research centre in Ottawa. Funding for the position, \$2 million over 10 years, was received from two charities, including Do It For Daron, launched by a former Ottawa Senators hockey player and his wife after their 14-year-old daughter died from suicide.
- Corporal Ron Francis, a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) who was stripped of his uniform and placed on medical leave for smoking medical marijuana while working, has been found dead. The cause of death was not confirmed. A support group for RCMP members suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) said Francis "lost his battle with PTSD."
- The Canadian Medical Hall of Fame announced the induction of six new members: Dr. Alan Bernstein, Dr. Judith Hall, Dr. Bernard Langer, Dr. John McCrae (deceased), Dr. Julio Montaner and Dr. Duncan Sinclair. The induction ceremony will take place Apr. 23, 2015, in Winnipeg.
- Former Canadian Medical Association President Dr. John Haggie has entered provincial politics, winning the Liberal nomination for the district of Gander, Newfoundland and Labrador. Haggie, originally from the United Kingdom, has been a general surgeon in Gander since 1996. — Roger Collier, *CMAJ*

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