

to the demise of physical education curriculum. “A big fear among curriculum support folks is that a minister might say to another minister that DPA is really great, and that minister might come back and the next thing you know there’s no physical education in schools,” says Stenac.

Manitoba opted for the physical education approach because there’s an implicit “higher level of rigour in the teaching of physical education” than in daily physical activity, says Jean-Vianney Auclair, assistant deputy minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth for Manitoba. “For us, it’s a better quality education.”

Tremblay laments that responsibility for delivering physical education curriculum is often vested with school boards, which results in significant inconsistencies within provinces and the country.

McManes, meanwhile, hopes that more provinces will ultimately opt for the physical education route, and then put resources in place to ensure that physical education is taught by qualified personnel.

Defenders of the daily physical activity approach argue that current models of physical education aren’t engaging students. Guy Faulkner, an assistant professor of physical education and health at the University of Toronto, found a significant linear decrease in the number of students choosing to enroll in optional physical education credits in Ontario high schools. Part of the reason is that physical education has to compete with other subjects that are viewed as higher priorities.

Yet the kids that don’t want to take physical education are the ones who could benefit from it the most, Faulkner says. “I think if kids are choosing physical education, it’s much more likely to lead to a lifelong interest in physical activity, rather than feeling that you’re forced into doing it. I think that when you force people to take physical education, you get people who don’t enjoy it or appreciate it whatsoever.”

Schools should be thinking of more creative options to make physical education an attractive option, he adds. — Laura Mueller, Ottawa, Ont.

News @ a glance

Fit patients: A survey of the opinions of 870 British family and hospital doctors published in *The Telegraph’s Doctor magazine* on Jan. 28, 2008, indicated many believe patients should be denied medical treatment because of lifestyle. Some 94% believe alcoholics who won’t stop drinking should be denied liver transplants; while 50% believe smokers should be denied heart bypass

surgery. About one-third believe the elderly should be denied surgery.

More students: The Manitoba government will invest \$3 million to create 10 new spots for medical students at the University of Manitoba Faculty of Medicine, thereby raising the number of available spaces to 110 from 100. — Wayne Kondro, *CMAJ*

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Will Ayotte

Perhaps the world’s largest want ads have been strung from the exterior walls of CMA House as part of the national association’s new “More Doctors, More Care” campaign, which aims to elevate the physician-shortage issue onto the nation’s political agenda.

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