

## OUR VIEW

# Suicide opens window into residency system

For years, we have heard that it's been difficult for many in Ontario to find a family doctor.

We've heard that most general practitioners are working at capacity and are unable to take on additional patients. We've seen some communities arrange offices for nurse practitioners to make up for a lack of local family physicians.

And, we've seen long lineups in hospital emergency rooms.

So it may come as a big surprise then to find that the provincial government is working to reduce the number of new physicians entering the field.

Since 2015/16, the number of residency spots in Ontario has been reduced by 25. Effectively, this means that some medical students will be denied the opportunity to fulfil the final step in their path to becoming a qualified physician.

It's not just Ontario, though. Across Canada this year, the number of students unmatched with a residency has hit a record high of 68, with 35 of those students from Ontario, according to the Canadian Resident Matching Service.

Students who have studied for years, spent many thousands of dollars, accumulated (likely significant) student debt, and are close to starting their careers - in effect repaying taxpayers' investment in their education - are suddenly hitting a roadblock.

That's the situation that Robert Chu faced, when he penned a letter to Ontario Health Minister Eric Hoskins, other politicians and universities in 2016. Chu completed an undergraduate degree at the University of Toronto in three years instead of four and was accepted to McMaster University medical school in 2012.

He had several articles published in medical journals.

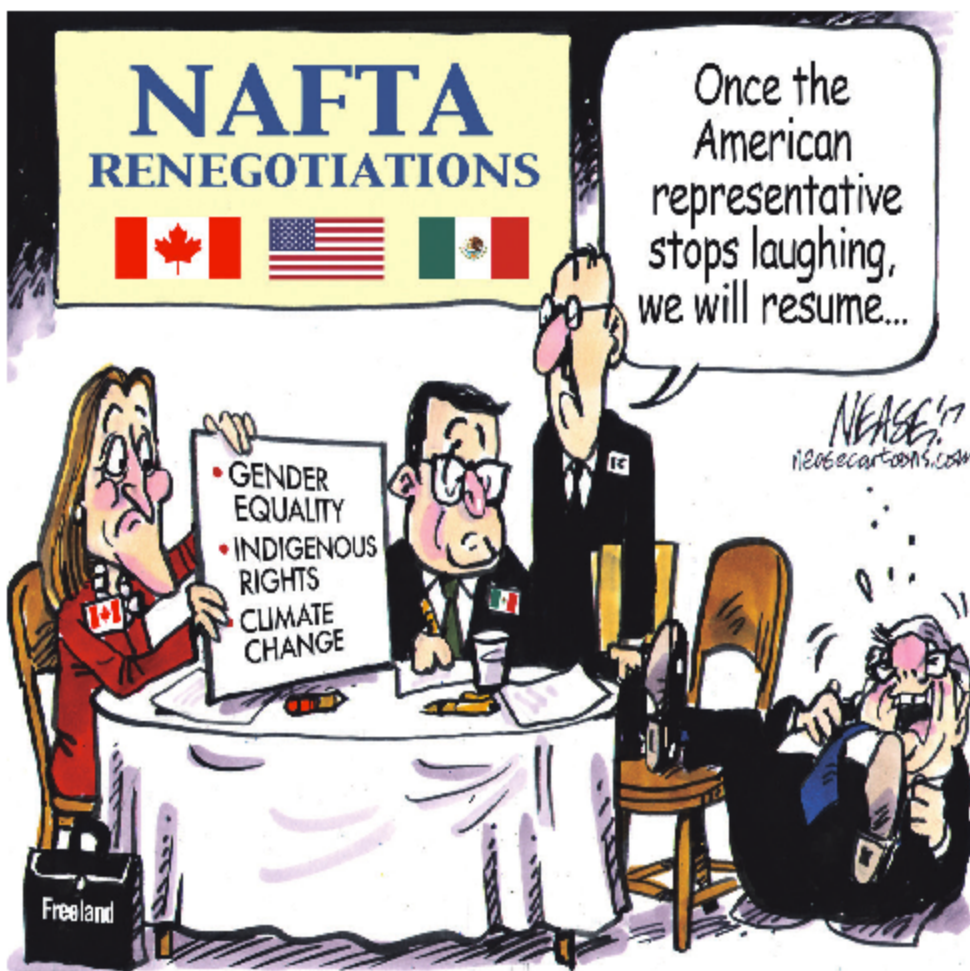
Yet, he was refused residency twice and railed against the injustice of a system that he said saw spaces reserved for international students who were incapable of getting into Canadian programs.

"Without a residency position, my degree is effectively useless. My diligent studies of medical texts, careful practice of interview and examination skills with patients and my student debt in excess of \$100,000 on this pursuit have all been for naught," Chu wrote in the April 18, letter.

Last September, at the age of 25, Chu took his own life.

The Chu tragedy opens a window into a system that must be changed. It's one thing to tie admissions to medical schools to the needs of the population, but shouldn't the number of residency positions match the number of graduates?

Pulling the rug out from qualified people nearing the end of their medical training, does a disservice to them and to taxpayers.



## LETTERS &amp; COMMENTARY

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come up the you know where.

The heat must have been unbearable.

I do not know who thinks up these ideas.

My choice?

On a day like Sunday, a nice lawn chair on the VIP balcony overlooking the 18th hole, sipping their choice of a tall cold beverage.

Ron St. Louis

## A theory about litterers

I have a suspicion: fast-foods/drinks have a brain-deteriorating effect.

If not, why would a person able to drive to a res-

taurant, order and pay for a drink, drive away, and then can't take the empty cup, carton or bag home to put into the garbage or recycle?

Suddenly the brain stops working, and the trash flies out the window. Is there a chemical at work, that maybe we don't know about yet?

The only explanation I can come up with is fast foods.

Something in them makes the brain conk out momentarily, and that's when the garbage starts flying.

Doris Toepp

Re: Georgetown resident Dale Cox wanted to cele-

## Demeaning way to 'honour' troops

I find it a bit demeaning and insulting to ask our troops, our soldiers, members of someone's family to be honored the way they do at the Canadian Open held this past weekend at Glenn Abbey in Oakville.

The general who approved this does not think that they have served our country in enough "harm's way".

What do they ask of our soldiers on this day?

They ask them to stand at attention at the back of the 18th green.

They hold an eight-foot pole bearing our flag. They are in full formal regalia, with their medals.

Thank goodness for our Scottish-issued kilts, where a soft breeze is wel-

## ABOUT US



The Georgetown Independent & Free Press, published every Thursday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. The Metroland family of newspapers is comprised of more than 100 community publications across Ontario.



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