

# First, do no harm

There's a cultural deification of cannabis happening in Canada.

The weed is touted as the cure for just about everything and suggestions there may be any downsides to its use are silenced by choruses singing its praises.

A Metroland staffer, already taking prescription medication for anxiety and a sleep disorder, had her curiosity peaked by rampant claims that cannabis is a miraculous panacea for whatever ails you.

She asked her doctor about switching from big pharma to medical marijuana.

But the doctor refused, saying she had taken an oath to "do no harm." While the physician was aware of all the anecdotal evidence that cannabis is the answer to myriad health problems, she just hadn't seen the scientific proof. And she had concerns about unknown health risks.

Her advice? Wait for the science to come in. Only then would the doctor feel comfortable prescribing cannabis as medicine.

And maybe that's good advice for recreational use as well.

Because the research hasn't been done. It's too difficult to do quality research on something that is illegal.

In Canada, that barrier disappears in July. Now the science can be done and we want to see research funded from the profits our government will make through the CCBO.

Just last month the feds were patting themselves on the back announcing 14 projects to get \$100,000 each in Canadian Institute of Health Research funding to look into how cannabis use will affect different populations and how use changes post-legalization.

Bill Blair, federal point man for cannabis legislation, made the announcement at the Centre for Addiction and Mental health, which is appropriate.

The government admits the research doesn't exist and Blair said they're committed to strengthening the evidence base.

They plan to pony up \$1.4-million, which in the world of research is little more than chump change.

Much more will be needed for the kind of broad studies that will now be possible, into the good, the bad and the potential ugly.

We want to see data. Track cannabis use after legalization: the health ramifications, as well as the social costs and benefits.

Drug use and misuse in all forms, whether it's too many smart cocktails, mind-numbing prescription opiate addiction or cannabis smoking, vaping or snacking, is a health issue. One that needs adequate funding to address.

So we expect to see CCBO profits put into quality science, research and health care.

## CHAMPION TRACKS



Boesveld family photo

**Josslyn, Ben and Evy Boesveld and parents Kaleigh and Greg have fun at Sapodilla Bay Beach in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos. Going away? Pack a copy of the Champion in your suitcase, snap a creative photo and email your Champion Tracks submission to [editor@miltoncanadianchampion.com](mailto:editor@miltoncanadianchampion.com). Please include everyone's name, from left, and destination information.**

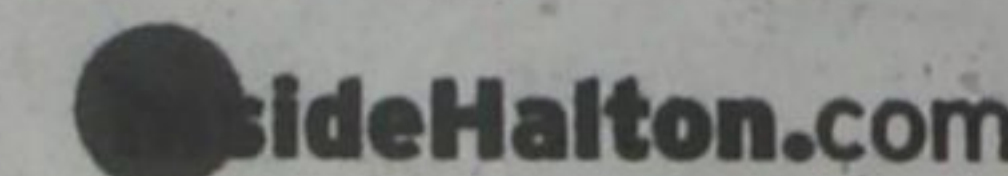
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## Enjoy winter fun in Halton

*'Conservation Halton offers plenty of options for outdoor fun,' writes Carr*



**GARY CARR**  
Column

Winter is a great time to get outside and explore Halton.

From outdoor adventures to unique shopping, dining and entertainment experiences, take advantage of some of the great winter activities we have right here in our community.

As a former hockey player, I enjoy getting outdoors and being active during the winter months, and Conservation Halton offers plenty of options for

cold alerts at [halton.ca](http://halton.ca) to get instant updates and tips.

Bring the fun indoors and visit any of our four municipalities - Burlington, Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville - to find the best shopping, dining, performance arts, festivals and special events. The whole family can spend a day exploring everything at Royal Botanical Gardens or you can check out new exhibits at local museums and performances, at some of our theatres and galleries.

If finding unique shopping and dining spots are on your list of things to do, check out our quaint downtown cores and find local restaurants, cafés and shops. Or head over to the Toronto Premium Out-

lets, one of the premier shopping destinations in the Greater Toronto Area. Visit your local municipality's website to find more activities, including information for local skating rinks and recreation centres.

Halton is a premier tourism destination for winter fun. To plan your next outdoor adventure, visit [halton.ca/tourism](http://halton.ca/tourism). However you choose to explore Halton this winter, I hope you enjoy exploring our region with family and friends and experience all of the great things that make Halton a great place to live, work, raise a family and retire.

*- Gary Carr is Regional Chair of Halton Region. To contact him, email [gary.carr@halton.ca](mailto:gary.carr@halton.ca).*

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