

Doctor to try top-down approach with Liberals

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Only for so long can a person work within the confines of a system that doesn't serve everyone, before deciding it's time to take a different route to fix it.

That is partly why Dr. Jane Philpott has decided to seek the federal Liberal nomination for Markham-Stouffville.

"Crazy, isn't it?" Dr. Philpott said laughing. "Medicine and politics aren't that far apart."

Dr. Philpott officially joined the Liberal party May 3, 2011 — a day after the last federal election — because she was disappointed with its outcome and decided it was time to become openly involved.

Dr. Philpott chose the Liberals because their values most closely align with her own; they are the most "genuinely democratic federal party" and they are "thoughtful, fair and compassionate".

"(I'm) impressed with the well-informed, collaborative approach to policy development in the party," she said.

Dr. Philpott graduated from medical school in 1984 and spent almost 10 years in Africa before opening a



DR. JANE PHILPOTT: Longtime Stouffville doctor is throwing her hat in the political ring.

practice in Stouffville in 1998.

As a family doctor, she has spent countless hours with families and individuals trying to solve their maladies, but time and again, she has bumped up against systemic and societal issues preventing her from doing so.

Instead of trying to fix the system from the bottom up, she will try from the top down.

One of her other concerns is how

the federal government continues to give the province money without conditions attached. By doing so, we are opening ourselves up to user fees, private clinics and billing, all of which do not make the Canadian health care system all-inclusive.

"I don't want to be in that kind of Canada," she said.

"This is a bedrock issue in Canadian society," she said.

Meanwhile, Dr. Philpott isn't 100 per cent sold on the recently signed European Union trade agreement.

As part of the agreement, Canada will extend patent protection on pharmaceuticals for two years, which is estimated to increase the cost of prescription drugs, to consumers and governments, by up to \$3 million a year. The federal government said it is willing to compensate the provinces for any additional costs.

"It appears it's going to be positive for Canadians ... will they be able to afford their drugs for diabetes."

It's not just health care Dr. Philpott has issues with.

"The economy works for some people, but it doesn't work for everyone," she said, noting youth, seniors and those who have mental health

issues lack job opportunities.

Dr. Philpott said she wants there to be incentives available to companies that are willing to take risks on these people.

Dr. Philpott has notified Markham Stouffville Hospital officials she will give up her administrative duties associated with her position as chief of family medicine. She will, however, keep her patients until the election is closer.

"I do love being a family doctor," she said.

In 2010, Dr. Philpott moved her Stouffville practice to Markham, where she became the lead physician of the Health For All Family Health Team, which is co-located with the Markham Family Medicine Teaching Unit.

"The community will be OK. We'll make sure there are lots of really good doctors to fill the gap," she said.

Between 1989 and 1994, Dr. Philpott and her family lived in West Africa, where she practised general medicine and helped develop a training program for village health workers. In 2004, she founded Give a Day for World AIDS, which has raised more than \$3.5 million for people and places affected by HIV.

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