

"national adult conversation." Why, then, does it quote Brian Mulroney and Stephen Harper and completely relinquish any voice from the left? It creates a false dichotomy: "How much privatization can we get away with," as opposed to, "Let's save our publicly funded Canadian health care system."

Mike Gallant, Petrolia, Ont.

Tommy Douglas had a wonderful idea in the late 1950s. But there is not a business or service known to mankind that can use a business model from the '50s and expect it to work in today's world. Your article is spot on in outlining what is wrong with health care and what needs to be done to start to remedy it. Until we as a society convey to our politicians that it is not okay to spend 50 cents of every tax dollar collected on an antiquated archaic model, we will continue our downward slide.

Jeff Brisbois, Port Williams, N.S.

My wife's recent five-month experience dealing with breast cancer proved our health care system is world-class. We were humbled by the quality of care from our surgeon to oncologists to technicians to nurses to volunteers, right down to the staff in coffee shops. We have been self-employed for decades and would have difficulty affording health care in the U.S., but we can't imagine receiving better care than we did in Canada. Thank you, Tommy Douglas!

Cam Mather, Tamworth, Ont.

I am a rheumatologist in a busy solo medical practice. Despite working in a large city, the ratio of physicians to people here is one to 75,000. My specialty attracts few trainees, in part due to lower compensation than other branches of medicines. My wait time is often over six months. One factor that is never addressed in articles such as yours is the responsibility of the patients to not abuse the system. For instance,

I have a no-show rate of 10 per cent to 25 per cent daily (not including cancellations, such as late-notice personal emergencies). I have tried billing patients for missed appointments (only 10 per cent will pay) and threatening to not re-book such patients, yet the problem persists. I know similar no-show rates are experienced by other physicians and radiology departments. Decreasing wait times by 25 per cent would be a major achievement.

A.B. Montgomery, Mississauga, Ont.

Ken MacQueen didn't note the correlation between our failure to provide timely, quality care and our low adoption rates for electronic medical records (EMR). Statistics show that while Britain, New Zealand and the Netherlands

restricting freedom of the press ("Return of the Iron Fist?" International, Jan. 31) sounds like more of an echo of the Hungarian political left-wing cry of frustration than a convincing international report. The more corrupt a republic, the more laws it requires. After half a century of Communist rule, the Eastern European societies were so perverted by the lack of ethics that clear regulations are a core requirement for their proper functioning. This new Hungarian legislation Porter is so concerned about is trying to do just that.

Sebastian Benczur, Edmonton

Debating dictatorship

The High Commission of Sri Lanka has taken serious note of the points made in the article "A dictator in the making?" (Inter-

by terrorism. It completely ignores or refuses to accept the positive developments in the country, such as the prevailing peace and security, and the focus on developing the economy.

Sumith Dassanayake, Minister-Counsellor, High Commission of Sri Lanka in Canada, Ottawa

Women's right

"The case of the missing tampons" (Bazaar, Jan. 31) made me want to spit blood. Millions of women worldwide use the O.B. brand because of its simple efficiency (and each woman easily saves over 10,000 plastic applicators from the trash during her lifetime). Yet Harry Finley—a man who runs a museum of menstruation—claims that "women don't like to stick their fingers into their vaginas, especially during menstruation."

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"What you don't know about Stephen Harper"
—Paul Wells and John Geddes
(250 comments)

"The damage done by doing so little"
—Andrew Coyne
(148 comments)

"Fat loss, great sex and lentils—lots of lentils"
—Michelle Magnan
(47 comments)

spend less per capita on health care than Canada, they continue to provide better, more timely care. It's no coincidence that these three countries remain at the top for adoption and use of EMR. Our health care professionals are among the smartest and most dedicated in the entire world and yet we expect them to use an old, paper-based system to address modern problems.

Sam Chebib, CEO & President of Nightingale Informatix Corporation, Markham, Ont.

Functioning of the press

Anna Porter's article about the new Hungarian law accused of

national, Dec. 13) and allegations made about the government of Sri Lanka and its elected president, Mahinda Rajapaksa. The article expresses concern over the recent constitutional amendment that removed set term limits on the presidency, yet the amendment under reference was adopted democratically and constitutionally. It is very unfair to target some of the other members of the Rajapaksa family, who have been democratically elected by the people of Sri Lanka. The entire article portrays a bleak image of Sri Lanka, a country that is emerging out of a long and brutal conflict, held hostage

Give me a break. I'd like to know how many women he polled to get that gem of an idea. But what's really sad is that as a society we seem to be condoning the use of silicon and gel to enhance our exterior, but due to a drug company's "business decisions" we shun the right and importance of how we feel as women, and people, on the inside.

Cara Sinclair, Vancouver

We welcome readers to submit letters to either letters@macleans.ca or to *Maclean's*, 11th floor, One Mount Pleasant Road, Toronto, Ont. M4Y 2Y5. Please supply your name, address and daytime telephone number. Letters should be less than 300 words, and may be edited for space, style and clarity.