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MINISTRY OF HEALTH

IMPACT OF ARTS AND CULTURE ON HEALTH

Question by:
The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

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Hon. Patricia Bovey: Thank you, minister, for being with us today. The pandemic has taken a mental and physical toll on all Canadians. Hill Strategies Research proved the strong connection between cultural participation and general and mental health. We know people who attend live theatre, classical and popular music, comedy events, cultural festivals, art galleries and who read books have better mental health and medical outcomes. B.C. doctors are now able to prescribe a national park pass to patients to aid in their mental health, and in Montreal they have been prescribing museum visits. Artists' generosity and inspiration have given so much to us all during these two years.

Minister, is there any thought of Health Canada promoting arts and culture as a means of achieving better overall health for Canadians as we emerge from the effects of the pandemic?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P., Minister of Health:

Thank you. That's a wonderful question, Senator Bovey. Here at Health Canada, we've spoken about, and the department has worked a long time on, healthy living, healthy eating and health in general — physical health, in most cases. What you are alluding to, and I think you are doing it well, is the fact that with mental health also comes healthy social and cultural activities. How we are together, what we do together, what we listen to and enjoy together — they contribute significantly to our mental health, individually and collectively.

I'm so grateful that you highlight the role and benefit of the cultural sector in this. I come from Quebec City, where arts and culture are very strong, and we're proud of that. I'm certainly very proud of the tremendous level of talent and energy that I normally see in Quebec City, and hopefully we will see it increasingly across Canada as we go through this crisis and return to greater mental and physical health.
