

Excerpt of email to Go Public from the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP)

From time to time, CARP puts questions to its membership for its own use, and sometimes for partners and clients. We were approached to inquire into the incidence of smoking among CARP members, and their awareness of smoking's hazards and smoking alternatives. We thought that the questions were really interesting and decided to do the work.

Smoking has not appeared as a major item in our ongoing survey of what issues are top of mind with our membership; Financial security, home care and the perpetual shambles which is our national health system are. But now that the matter has been raised, we may look into it further on our own. Meanwhile, the client has not indicated any interest in continuing this research, at least through us, so that's where the matter rests.

Go Public: How did CARP come to partner with RBH?

They asked. Many others do too, like political parties. Zoomers are a very large and heretofore neglected population and market, whose interests, opinions and voting behaviour are finally being recognized as important and valuable.

Go Public: Why did CARP agree to conduct a focus group with CARP members on behalf of RBH?

Smoking had fallen from view as a societal issue of recent date. We found the idea interesting, and so agreed to pose some questions.

Go Public: What does CARP say to Ms. Gould's criticism that the survey, and Unsmoke Canada's campaign (an initiative by RBH), is the opposite of good health advocacy?

That's her opinion. Many others, including credible experts, think the path of harm reduction is the best way forward; so smoking that doesn't combust may well be helpful for those who cannot otherwise kick the habit. We put out the invitation to participate to 93,000 CARP members and Ms. Gould was the only one to object.

Go Public: What does CARP say to the fact that Ms. Gould withdrew her membership following her discovery that CARP had partnered with RBH?

Shrug. We have about 250,000 members. They don't always agree with everything that we do, but they recognize the overall importance of an advocacy such as ours, with its unique and constant access to media through Zoomer, not to mention our significant success in repealing mandatory retirement in Canada, innovating the idea of income tax splitting for couples, and pressing the government for extra support for low income seniors among others. Cancelling those you disagree with is a troubling new feature of the woke/illiberal left mentality and propels the angry divisiveness that marks our democracy in crisis. Does she quit her family every time she has an argument?

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