

Into the Light

An ME/FM Awareness Event with the P.E.I. Lieutenant Governor

P.E.I. Lieutenant Governor, Madame Antoinette Perry, hosted an information and awareness session on May 16, 2018 at Government House. Entitled Into the Light, the event shone light onto ME and FM , two of the most prevalent illnesses in the world yet largely unknown.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), also known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) is a debilitating illnesses characterized by persistent post exertional malaise and numerous other symptoms related to cognitive, immune and autonomous dysfunction which cannot be explained by any other medical condition. Fibromyalgia (FM) is characterized by chronic widespread pain of the muscles, ligaments and tendons and accompanied by other symptoms affecting various systems within the body.

There are nearly a million Canadians and approximately 4500 Islanders diagnosed with ME/CFS and FM for which there is no treatment or cure. These illnesses are more common than breast cancer, Parkinsons and MS combined.

It was special event with Dr. Jonathan Fox, MD from the Integrated Chronic Care Service in Fall River, NS as key note speaker. He is a specialist in the treatment and care of patients with ME/CFS and FM and multiple chemical sensitivities. The Center at which he works is the only one of its kind in the Maritime region and accepts referrals from other provinces.

The Center adopts a holistic approach to treatment and care and has a wide range of health care professionals on staff to meet the varied needs of its patients.

The event was also special in another way, in that the Kay Larkin, Janice Coady and Dolores Griffin followed Dr. Fox's presentation by providing a personal perspective on the impact ME/CFS and FM has had on their lives. This was followed by a poem entitled Do You See Who I Am written and read by Rita Stanley who lives with the daily struggles of FM and the many other health issues that come with it.

There were over 60 people in attendance which included health care professionals, and organizations, government officials, politicians and policy makers, university staff and students and patients and their family and friends. Following the presentations, guests were treated to an afternoon tea hosted by Her Honour, Madame Perry.

The event was organized by Dolores Griffin, a local volunteer member of the ME/FM Acton Network, which is a national non-profit organization dedicated to supporting ME and FM patient through advocacy, information, research and education. Support for the event was also provided by Confederation Center of the Arts, Murphy's Pharmacies and the Dundee Arms Inn.

The event was also followed up by an interview with Dr. Fox by PEI's evening TV program Compass.