



Press Release

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Pierre Brunet, a friendly Francophone dentist active in his community

SUMMERSIDE, PEI, July 31, 2015 – As part of the Étoile Santé (health star) campaign that aims to highlight, recruit and publicize healthcare professionals who provide services in French on Prince Edward Island, the PEI French Health Network (PEIFHN) is happy to announce that the Étoile Santé for July is awarded to dentist Pierre Brunet.

Dr. Pierre Brunet is a pillar of French-language healthcare on Prince Edward Island. When he founded his practice in Wellington in 1986, he had already been practicing on the Island for eight years and had several years of experience elsewhere in the country.

“I graduated in Toronto in 1970, then worked in Labrador for a year and a half and spent about five years in Churchill, Manitoba,” explained Dr. Brunet. “In 1978, I moved with my family to Prince Edward Island, where I was a school dentist. We worked out of mobile clinics set up beside the schools. After eight years of working with students, I opened an office in Wellington. Back then it was something new for people to have a dentist who spoke French. My decision to settle in Wellington was shaped by my desire to work more in French.”

Dr. Brunet now works in a clinic in Summerside. A few years ago, when it was decided to tear down the health centre in Wellington, he didn’t want to leave his patients without any dental service. He therefore sold his practice to a dentist in Summerside. “My patients were transferred with my practice to this dentist and I followed my patients, working for this dentist three days a week. I would say that almost all my patients followed me. Over half of my patients at this clinic are Francophones.”

Besides working three days a week at the dental centre in Summerside, Dr. Brunet also spends two days in clinics for low-income patients. “I’m at the Charlottetown clinic on Tuesdays and the Summerside clinic on Wednesdays. This invaluable service really helps people, because if you don’t have insurance or make enough money, dental health is way down on your list of priorities. Yet no matter what your income is, dental and mouth care is very important to overall health,” Dr. Brunet added.

In fact, a patient at one of the clinics for low-income patients nominated Dr. Brunet to the PEI French Health Network for recognition as an Étoile Santé. “He is very accepting and I always feel comfortable with him,” she explained. “He doesn’t judge and he always explains the situation clearly.”

Dentists cultivate a trusting relationship with their patients that may last for years. “My Francophone patients really like to be greeted and treated in French,” Dr. Brunet noted. “And I, as a member of the Francophone community in Greater Summerside, like to know that I’m helping to keep the French language alive.”

Dr. Pierre Brunet and his wife, Anne, who is originally from Scotland, have four children and a grandson who speak French.

Finding healthcare professionals who speak French and accessing their services is still a major issue in increasing the offer of French-language healthcare services on Prince Edward Island. It is critical to make French-speaking professionals more accessible and visible in the community, which is how the Étoile Santé awareness campaign came to be.

Dr. Pierre Brunet's contact information can be found in the bilingual service provider directory at www.santeipe.ca/repertoire.

People are invited to nominate health professionals who actively offer health services in French on Prince Edward Island. For more information on the Étoile Santé campaign or to nominate someone directly on the PEIFHN website, go to www.santeipe.ca.

The PEI French Health Network is a non-profit organization that collaborates with various partners in order to improve access to quality French-language health services and programs for Prince Edward Island's Acadian and Francophone population. The organization brings together representatives from target community groups, educational facilities, health professionals, health service managers and the provincial government. It is also one of 16 networks that make up the Société Santé en français. The PEI French Health Network is funded by Health Canada within the framework of the Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities.

-30-

Photo: Dr. Pierre Brunet

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