

Call him Doc Holiday

Ottawa chiropractor wants a National Health Day for all

By HOLLY LAKE, OTTAWA SUN

You may not have heard, but tomorrow has been proclaimed National Health Day by the city.

Canadians have long wanted a holiday between New Year's and Easter, but don't count on getting the day off work just yet.

You can try giving your boss a note from Dr. John Zielonka, but chances are the only employees getting a long weekend this week are those in his two downtown offices. "I practise what I preach. I've closed both my offices and pay my staff for the day off," Zielonka said. "We want a holiday and we want it for our health."

For the past 15 years, the chiropractor has been preaching and promoting health to his patients. For the last two, he's also been lobbying government and all MPs to declare the third Friday of February a holiday.

But Zielonka said it's about more than getting a day off.

"It's about learning what the word health actually means."

OPTIMUM WELL-BEING

While everyone talks about waiting lists, MRIs and heart disease, none of it has anything to do with health, he said. Rather, health is the optimal state of physical, mental and social well-being, not simply the absence of disease or infirmity.

"We're sitting at the opposite end of the health continuum. We really have a sick care system, not a health care system."

National Health Day, whether it's a holiday or not, is about understanding health and taking the initiative to achieve it.

It's moving away from the thinking that there's a pill to make you healthy, that it's the government's or your insurance company's responsibility to help make you well and that as you get older you should slow down. To get a doctor's note for tomorrow, visit excellenceinhealth.com.