

Private Members Statement – Scleroderma Awareness

Hon. Alan Lagimodiere, Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations:
November 21, 2022

Today I bring awareness of scleroderma, a complicated, aggressive autoimmune disease, and to acknowledge the bravery of individuals who live with scleroderma.

There is no known cause of scleroderma and no two cases will present alike, making diagnosis difficult and the need for many specialists to be involved in the diagnosis and treatment. Each person's journey living with scleroderma is unique.

Women are affected five to six times more than men.

Scleroderma refers to all types of sclerosis, both skin changes and changes to other tissues and organs of the body. Raynaud's, stiffness in hands, joint pain, fatigue, trouble sleeping are all early symptoms.

Systemic sclerosis causes the most severe outcomes.


As scleroderma progresses, it leads to an overproduction of collagen in connective tissue. Scleroderma is cruel, and since connective tissue is everywhere in the body, no organ is immune from the devastating effects of scleroderma.

Advancing stages of scleroderma result in damage to the heart and lungs, circulatory problems, high blood pressure, shortness of breath, heart failure, kidney failure and digestive problems and malnutrition. This leads to a significant decrease in quality of life and life expectancy.

No cure is available, so symptomatic treatments are employed to help cope with daily functions and try to slow the progression.

Life-altering decisions for individuals and their families need to be made as conditions develop and evolve. Those diagnosed know the road is not easy, but choose to not let scleroderma define who they are. They should be admired for their courage to live each day doing the things they love despite the obstacles they face.





Dr. Alan Lagimodiere Selkirk
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Members from Scleroderma Manitoba, MLA Cox, MLA Mickiefield, MLA Michaleski and Judy joined me yesterday for a very enlightening and informative meeting to discuss the impacts of Scleroderma on individuals and their families. Diagnosis is often a long road with many specialists involved. Scleroderma refers to all types of Sclerosis, both skin changes and changes to other tissue and organs of the body. As it progresses it leads to an over production of collagen in connective tissue. It is a cruel disease and since connective tissue is everywhere, no organ is immune. I would like to thank Jo-Ann Lapointe McKenzie, Helen Goertzen, Crystal Smith, and Debbie Robitaille for joining us to share experiences, the successes, the hard days, and the impacts to everyday life of Scleroderma. Approximately 330 Manitobans and 22,000 Canadians have been diagnosed with Scleroderma. Each and everyone one of them should be admired for their courage to live each day doing the things they love despite the obstacles.

<https://sclerodermamanitoba.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/sclerodermamanitoba>

I ask my colleagues to please rise and recognize those living with scleroderma, including my wife Judy and members of Scleroderma Manitoba. Thank you for your ongoing work and your support.

I now table their names for Hansard.

Scleroderma Manitoba:

Jo-Ann Lapointe McKenzie, President

Helen Goertzen, Past Secretary

Crystal Smith, Member at large

Debbie Robitaille, Member at large

Linda Cassell, Support Group team member

Judith Lagimodiere