**Communications Director Piece:** The Townhall Meeting

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**Assignment Acknowledgement**

This assignment has a Turnitin originality score of 25%. Grammarly was used for grammatical correctness.

**Briefing Note:** The establishment of a novel government neurodegenerative research facility.

**Purpose**: Reviewing positive and negative positions and understanding both the opposing and proposing perspective on the novel government neurodegenerative research facility in London, Ontario.

**Background**: Animal committees and various community partners belonging to differing demographics have provided the government with concerns and positive feedback pertaining to the new establishment.

**Proposition**: In support of establishing the research facility

 **Partner: Undergraduate & Graduate Students**

**Point**: The culture of a research facility will offer students opportunities to collaborate with professionals, expand their networks, and engage in valuable neurodegenerative research.

**Response**: This research institute will foster collaboration and prioritize interdisciplinarity by developing a structure that encourages the intersection of various disciplines such as biology, physics, computer science, and more, to work towards innovative solutions for neurodegenerative diseases (Bradke, Maartens, & Teichmann, 2023). Additionally, the institute will prioritize academic partnerships with students from different fields, creating opportunities for new programs and employment.

**Partner: Local Residents**

**Point**: The new research facility will contribute to economic prosperity and create income opportunities for various individuals within the community.

**Response**: This research institute will enhance the economic value of the local community, as areas undergoing growth often experience significant real estate appreciation ('The Truth About the Real Estate Market,' n.d.). In Canada, the costs associated with neurological ailments are expected to rise (Gaskin et al., 2017). In 2007, the eleven most prominent neurological disorders cost Canada $9 billion, with six of these conditions contributing to 500,000 lives lost (Gaskin et al., 2017). This research facility will focus on the research and development of solutions for these common neurological disorders, aiming to reduce the economic burden on Canada.

**Partner: Patients and Patient Families**

**Point**: The new research facility for neurodegenerative diseases will focus on novel therapies, positioning patients at the forefront of potential solutions.

**Response**: The research facility will prioritize new therapies for neurodegenerative diseases that are most prevalent in Canada. The facility will recognize the importance of patient reported outcomes and the value of patient preferences into decision-making, which will help guide investigators to determine relevant research questions and clinical endpoints that are relevant to patients (Faulker et al., 2023).

**Opposition:** Against establishing the research facility

**Partner**: Environmental Activist

**Point**: The construction of a new research facility will increase pollution and increase overall carbon footprint due to increased waste.

**Response**: We understand that in Canada’s current environmental landscape the building sector contributes to 30% of the country’s greenhouse gas emissions (Canada Green Building Council, n.d.). Therefore, upon discussion we are planning to follow the Zero Carbon Building Standards to ensure the facility does not disrupt the environment it encompasses (Canada Green Building Council, n.d.).

**Partner**: Animal Rights Organization

**Point**: There is concern regarding the use of animal models for research purposes and the inappropriate methods of handling and animal care.

**Response**: All research involving animal models will only proceed when all other alternatives have been exhausted. We will ensure that a contemporary viewpoint surrounding reduction, replacement and refinement is used, to minimize harm, and maximize animal welfare (MacArthur, 2018). Full transparency will be maintained with the public. Moreover, we will follow guidelines established by the Canadian Council on Animal Care, stay current with all certifications, and ensure that all personnel involved with animal care are highly trained.

**Partner**: Broader Community

**Point**: The community is worried about the potential emission of zoonotic diseases from the animal models, they do not want a repeat of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Response**: We understand the concern surrounding the release and or spread of zoonotic diseases. However, over the years, reported outbreaks have been decreased with the implementation of adequate personnel health programs, strict husbandry and veterinary processes, and the use of animals that have been commercially reared (Fox & Lipman, 1991). In addition to incorporating these three aspects in the new facility, we will also ensure there are suitable safeguards to prevent zoonotic diseases among personnel.

**Summary:** The government supports the establishment of a new research facility as it brings economic success, academic excellence, and hope to patients. The concerns brought forth have been and will continue to be suitably addressed through transparency, ethical integrity and accountability.

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