

Doris Grinspun
Chief Executive Officer
Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO)
158 Pearl Street, Toronto, Ontario M5H 1L3

Dear Doris:

Thank you for giving the Green Party of Ontario the opportunity to share our views on the issues that matter to nurses in Ontario. I am pleased to respond on behalf of the GPO.

1. Do you support changes in provincial policy that would enable nurse practitioners (NP) to work to their full scope of practice and be appropriately compensated, thereby increasing access to health care in Ontario?

Yes, we support the need to have Nurse Practitioners' operate at their full scope of practice and to be compensated appropriately. We also support increasing access to health care in Ontario by increasing the number of Nurse Practitioner-led clinics across Ontario. We also support increasing the number of Nurse Practitioners across the province, particularly in long-term care, mental health, and acute care facilities in order to improve patient care and outcomes.

2. Will you support improving patient health outcomes and safety by mandating that:

***Any new nursing hires in tertiary, quaternary, and cancer care hospitals be RNs
All first home care assessments be conducted by an RN***

The Green Party wants to make sure that every person in Ontario has access to the best possible care, when and where they need it. We also support all health care practitioners working to their full scope of practice. We would work with various stakeholders, including the RNAO, when making decisions on changes to hospital staffing requirements. This includes making sure registered nurses conduct home care assessments and be hired in tertiary, quaternary, and cancer care hospitals.

3. Will you support increasing access to health services by implementing independent RN prescribing and allowing RNs to continue to initiate the controlled act of psychotherapy?

We are supportive of this action. We would work with professional regulatory bodies to ensure treatment options are clear and transparent, so that kinds of treatment they can expect to receive.

We are also supportive of independent RN prescribing. Expanding Nurse Practitioners' scope of practice has been important to combating the opioid crisis through enabling Nurse Practitioners to prescribe buprenorphine/naloxone.

4. Will you commit to supporting minimum staffing levels in LTC homes so that residents can live safely and with dignity?

Yes, we support mandating minimum staffing levels in long-term care homes to ensure the best care for residents in these facilities. We need to ensure that staff have the appropriate resources to address the needs of residents, particularly those who require complex care.

5. Do you support a health system that is anchored in primary care, and do you agree that the 4,000 RN care coordinators currently in the LHINs must be located in primary care settings?

Increasing investment in and support for better primary care and community-based care is a top priority for the Green Party. The Green Party supports transforming our health care system by focusing on illness prevention and health promotion by addressing the social determinants of health and anchoring health care in primary and community care. Personalized, local, and culturally appropriate care is extremely important. The party has also committed to providing more dedicated resources to LHINs to ensure equitable distribution of health funding and resources to communities across Ontario.

6. RNAO supports a provincial pharmacare program covering all medically necessary drugs without means testing, user fees or co-payments for Ontarians of all ages. Do you agree with RNAO?

We support a provincially funded pharmacare program to provide all Ontarians with access to medicine without co-payments or means testing, with the long term goal of pushing for of a federally funded pharmacare program.

7. In Ontario, about 2.3 million people cannot afford to visit a dental professional. Will you join RNAO and the Ontario Oral Health Alliance in asking the province to

invest \$10 million as a first step, to provide oral health care to adults and seniors living with low income across the province?

We support the implementation of a universal dental care program. Dental health is directly linked to an individual's overall health and well-being and an important part of a health promotion strategy.

8. Do you support RNAO's call to transform funding models in long-term care (LTC) homes so that funding is not cut when homes deliver better outcomes?

The Green Party supports efforts to provide the highest quality of care, affordably. Long-term care facilities delivering good outcomes should not be penalized for their efforts to improve care.

9. Do you agree that Ontarians should have ownership and control of their own personal health records and that this information should be electronic and portable between health-care settings?

Yes. It is due time that Ontarians have electronic access to their personal health care records.

10. Do you support government working in partnership with Indigenous nations to address urgent health needs identified by them, such as the ongoing crisis of children and youth suicide?

Yes. We support immediately acting on the requests of Indigenous communities to address urgent health needs in their communities.

We need to work with Political Territorial Organizations, Tribal Councils, and individual communities to increase the availability of health services, including those related to mental health and addiction, for on-reserve and urban Indigenous populations.

We also need to immediately increase the number of Indigenous health care professionals and support their retention within Indigenous communities, and provide increased funding for Aboriginal Health Access Centres.

11. Do you support increasing investment to prevent and address the crisis of homelessness:

Invest one per cent of Ontario's budget (\$1.5 billion) to build new affordable, accessible housing and fix existing units in need of repair

Create 30,000 supportive housing units for people with mental health and addiction challenges over 10 years

Work with other levels of government to address homelessness and ensure adequate shelter space

The Green Party supports several different measures in order to address homelessness and the lack of affordable housing in Ontario. We support allocating the necessary funding needed to properly address the current crisis.

We support the use of a “housing first” approach to develop dedicated supportive housing for people with mental health and addiction issues, physical disabilities, or acquired brain injuries who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

We plan to work together with all levels of government to ensure that the current need for housing is adequately met. We are supportive of the federal government’s National Housing Strategy, and we also support increased funding for municipalities to renovate deteriorating social housing and build new units.

12. Do you support raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour on January 1, 2019?

Yes, the Green Party supports the increase to a \$15 minimum wage, and we support providing local, family businesses with immediate cash flow relief by lowering their payroll taxes. We support living wages for workers and fair taxes for local businesses to improve local economies.

13. Will you push for a provincial carbon pricing system that is sufficient for the province to reach its greenhouse gas emission targets, while protecting vulnerable populations?

Yes. We will transition the province from the current cap and trade system toward a revenue-neutral carbon fee-and-dividend system. This will allow us to reduce Ontario’s GHG pollution by putting a high price on carbon pollution that will return all of the revenue directly to Ontarians in the form of a dividend cheque. This revenue will help Ontarians, especially those with modest and middle incomes, transition toward more carbon-efficient choices.

Our current provincial plans are not doing enough to reduce GHGs and limit the effects of climate change. We need to set updated, aggressive GHG targets to be carbon neutral by 2050 and expand programs to reduce our GHG emissions.

14. Ontario is not adequately investing in infrastructure and services. To restore these investments while balancing the provincial budget, RNAO advocates for expanding government revenue through a combination of fairer taxes and other revenue sources, such as making polluters pay. Do you agree with RNAO?

We are in desperate need of investment in infrastructure and services in Ontario, and we need to implement the proper revenue tools to make these investments.

We support dedicated revenue tools such as congestion charges, gas taxes, and parking levies to pay for transit infrastructure. We also need to raise resource royalties on large companies for mining our aggregates and minerals. We support increases on the taxes that the biggest corporations pay.

The Green Party believes in fiscal responsibility and government transparency. These revenue tools and others will ensure that we are able to pay for the services that we so desperately need while remaining financially accountable to the people of Ontario.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any further questions.

Samantha Bird
Director of Operations
Green Party of Ontario