



**Green Party of Ontario**  
PO Box 1132 Station F Toronto, ON M4Y 2T8

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Chief Executive Officer  
Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario

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Dear Doris,

Many thanks to you and the RNAO for the questions about the Green Party of Ontario's stances on health care and public health policy. I am pleased to respond on behalf of the GPO.

**1. Will your party expand the role of the RN to include prescribing medications and ordering diagnostic testing by 2015?**

GPO: The Green Party of Ontario (GPO) would like to see priority investments in front-line community care, nurse practitioner-led clinics, and family health teams. We support amendments to profession-specific acts to allow members of those professions to practice to the full extent of their demonstrated competencies as verified by their respective regulatory bodies.

**2. Will your party commit to expanding the role of the LHIN to encompass all sectors and phase out CCACs?**

GPO: Our communities are unique. We know that. And we deserve to be the ones making health care decisions. LHINs need to be reformed. We need local decision-making that is transparent to the public.

**3. What will you do to narrow the RN access gap between Ontario and the rest of Canada?**

GPO: We will work with the RNAO and other stakeholders to bring our RN population in line with the rest of the country. Our platform prioritizes investments in front-line community care, nurse practitioner-led clinics, and family health teams.

**4. To ensure that Ontarians receive access to quality care, will you commit to increasing the total number of new NPs each year by a minimum of 250 NPs?**

GPO: Yes, we will work with the RNAO and other stakeholders to bring our RN population in line with the rest of the country.

**5. Will your party support increasing the minimum wage immediately to \$14 per hour, and automatically index it to the rate of inflation thereafter, in order to bring workers 10 per cent above the Low Income Measure of poverty?**

GPO: Fully funding the recommendations of the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance and increasing the minimum wage are good first steps to eliminating

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poverty. However, Ontario needs a more efficient, effective and affordable way to reduce poverty over the long term.

The current system of support programs – for social assistance, child care, elder care, educational grants, housing subventions, and special diet allowance – are often over-subscribed and under-funded. They also usually require onerous application and qualification procedures, and sometimes continued monitoring and scrutiny. This leads to bloated bureaucracies and a general perception that government is policing the poor. It lacks dignity. And it hasn't worked.

Ontario needs a new approach. We need a system that puts money in the pockets of people who need support, not in a costly system of administration. The Green Party of Ontario supports the implementation of a Guaranteed Annual Income (GAI) in Ontario. A GAI would ensure that every person of working age in Ontario who files an income tax return would have an income that at least meets the poverty level. It would reduce administrative costs and government bureaucracy. It would lead to a more efficient, effective, and dignified system of social assistance.

The GPO recommends that the 2014 budget include provisions for establishing a public commission to determine how Ontario can best implement a program to provide a guaranteed annual income for all citizens.

**6. Will your party transform the social assistance system so that the income of people receiving Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) reflects the actual cost of living, including the cost of shelter, energy, and nutritious food?**

GPO: We support full funding for the recommendations from the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario.

The report makes it clear that social assistance programs are in need of significant reform. The status quo isn't working and Ontario must do better.

Comprehensive reform including the following is needed:

- Exploring the best options to move to a guaranteed annual income,
- Eliminating income taxes for those with low to moderate incomes to increase take home pay,
- Taxing land value but not the use of land, which will reduce taxes on higher density housing, lowering housing costs for lower-income citizens,

- Ending the claw-back penalties on benefits and for the working poor that slow or prevent their reintegration into the workforce, and practice of forcing people to liquidate their financial assets before receiving social assistance.

**7. Will you increase monthly payments to single adults receiving OW by \$100; Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) payments to \$1310/child/year in July 2014, fully indexed to inflation; and increase OCB by \$100 annually?**

GPO: The Green Party of Ontario will double the Ontario Child Benefit for children of families who live close to the poverty line.

**8. Will your party increase access to safe shelter and stimulate job creation by building more affordable and supportive housing and by bringing aging housing stock up to standard? Will your party make permanent the 2013 transitional funding of \$42 million for the municipal Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative?**

GPO: The Green Party of Ontario recognizes that all Ontarians should have access to safe and secure housing. We are committed to confronting the lifestyle and environmental issues facing us today so that we can develop healthy livable communities that are safe for everyone.

Funding for maintenance and repair of already existing social housing stock not only helps create and maintain safe communities and securing housing options for low-income and marginalized groups, but also provides the opportunity to retrofit and upgrade outdated building features, thus making them more environmentally friendly. In addition to funding maintenance and repair of existing housing stock, we will also work to update the building code to ensure that housing standards provide a safe environment and ensure that these standards are being met across the board.

**9. What will you do to reduce people's exposure to toxics? What will you do to ensure that people have the right to know about the existence of toxics in the environment, in their homes, in their workplaces, and in consumer products?**

GPO: The Green Party takes a broad approach to well-being that emphasizes healthy people, healthy communities and a cleaner environment. Manufacturers should be required to disclose toxins in their products. The Green Party has always believed employers are required to guarantee safe workplaces for their employees.

**10. Will your party safeguard Medicare by prohibiting experiments in medical tourism?**

GPO: The GPO believes that the issue of medical tourism warrants further attention and study by the Ontario government.

**11. Will you work to promote pharmacare at the national level through the Council of the Federation to expand medicare to include pharmacare, and will you also work to bring pharmacare to Ontario, irrespective of whether the federal government proceeds to introduce a national pharmacare plan?**

GPO: The Green Party of Ontario aims to reform health care delivery to ensure that all Ontarians have access to quality community based health services. Our health strategy prioritizes health promotion and illness prevention. We will promote multi-disciplinary family health care teams to promote collaboration and ensure that each profession is working to its fullest ability.

By making sure we have an efficient health care system, we can also ensure that we have the money needed to treat serious illness effectively, without undue financial burden on individuals.

**12. Do you support creation of a dedicated fund with new revenue sources to pay for a substantial expansion of transit and active transportation? Do you support devotion of a kick-start fund for an immediate, visible improvement in transit, as recommended in the Golden panel report?**

GPO: Yes, the GPO supports the creation of a dedicated fund for public transit. The GPO will ensure that Ontario establishes a dedicated transit fund - one that cannot be wasted on other pursuits - to build new transit and support the operation of existing transit.

The GPO will work to implement dedicated revenue tools that are fair and progressive, such as land value capture, congestion charges, gas taxes and parking fees, to raise \$3 billion a year to build and operate transit in communities across Ontario.

**13. What will you do to ensure the fiscal capacity to deliver all essential health, health care, social and environmental services? Will you shift revenue to more efficient sources that encourage environmental and responsibility (such as environment levies like carbon taxes)? Will you work with the federal government to research the scope of tax evasion losses, and then put in resources to recover the lost revenues?**

GPO: The GPO believes that the fiscal future of Ontario could be bright, if we get our priorities in order; we should put our children first, and prioritize the protection of our food and water sources, and environment. As a short-term response, the government should make it a priority to find the \$340 million necessary to fund recommendations from the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance. By ending the 10% subsidy for electricity consumption that mostly benefits the wealthy, Ontario can afford to fund reforms to social assistance that remove barriers to work and provide financial support



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for those who need it most. For the long term, we need a new approach that puts money in the pockets of people who need support. We are calling on the government to initiate steps in the 2014 budget to implement a Guaranteed Annual Income (GAI) in Ontario.

Moreover, quite a portion of revenue can be recovered if we, as Ontarians, put a stop to the fire sale of our natural resources. Right now, Ontario has the lowest mining royalty rates in Canada and we are the least efficient users of mining aggregates of any jurisdiction in the world. What is more outrageous is that the Liberals are selling off our natural resources at rock bottom prices when the province has a \$12.5 billion deficit. This must change, and a good first step is to follow the Drummond Report's recommendation to make polluters to pay their fair share; the people of Ontario deserve their fair share of the province's resource wealth. Ontario could raise over \$1 billion per year by increasing royalties and levies for mining, aggregates and water taking. This will provide financial incentives for the efficient use of natural resources, it will relieve the taxpayers of some of the burden of dealing with pollution, it will restore funding to the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Natural Resources, and will spur innovation and job creation.

Finally, prime farmland and clean drinking water are essential to our lives, our health, and our happiness. We have to commit to protecting these vital resources for future generations. Ontario is losing 365 acres of farmland a day, an area the size of Toronto every year. We can never replace it, and only 0.5% of Ontario's land is prime farmland in the first place. The GPO supports the introduction of legislation to permanently protect Ontario's Class 1 farmland and source-water regions. We will make sure that the land and water that sustains us now is preserved for future generations. Best of all, protecting prime farmland from development does not cost Ontario's taxpayers anything. The benefits, on the other hand, are priceless.

Best Regards,

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