



Andrea Horwath

Leader, Ontario New Democrats

www.OntarioNDP.com

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Doris Grinspun, Executive Director
David McNeil, President
Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario
158 Pearl Street
Toronto, ON M5H 1L3

Dear Ms. Grinspun and Mr. McNeil,

Ontario's New Democrats are committed to high-quality healthcare and health promotion. We have immense respect for the key role Ontario's nurses play in our health care system, and we share your goal of ensuring the best possible care—and the healthiest lives—for patients in this province.

In pursuit of this goal, we are committed to strengthening primary care and increasing the RN workforce. We support raising the full-time share of RN employment. We know that if we are going to advocate for a strong nursing workforce in Ontario, full-time employment is essential. Too much part-time employment hurts continuity of care and patient outcomes, and impacts negatively on the livelihood of hardworking nurses. We will continue the guarantee of full-time jobs for new nursing graduates.

We also believe in the effectiveness of preventive care. Giving people the chance to visit their physician or nurse practitioner on a regular basis can help stop problems before they start and eases the load on our health system. To this end, we will fund and build 50 new family health centres, comprised of Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics and Community Health Centres. They will offer a range of primary care and health promotion services that will address the social determinants of health and work alongside diverse communities to improve their health and wellbeing.

This commitment, along with our plan to bring 200 new physicians to underserved communities, will bring primary care to over 600,000 Ontarians by 2015.

High quality, dependable home care services are another key element in the strength of our public health care system. Yet, the for-profit home care model—supported by both the Liberals and the Conservatives —has funnelled public dollars into private pockets and made this high quality care increasingly difficult to access. The NDP will conduct a comprehensive review of home care policy so that our precious healthcare dollars are spent providing services – not generating profit.





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Many other factors also inform and affect healthcare. Strong anti-poverty measures and environmental initiatives will improve the health of our province. This is why we have outlined a number of key commitments for fighting poverty in Ontario. We will raise the minimum wage to \$11 per hour immediately, and then index it to the cost of living. We will also increase Employment Standards enforcement to protect people's rights on the job, reduce the clawback of social assistance benefits from people with disabilities when they're moving back into a job, and ensure Ontario Works and ODSP rates keep pace with inflation.

Ontario's New Democrats also have a plan to address environmental health issues and agree with RNAO that serious and immediate action is required. If elected, New Democrats will immediately place coal plants on emergency stand-by, producing energy only when desperately needed. We will completely phase out coal-fired electricity by 2014, and look at alternative ways of powering the plants, such as biomass.

We will also halt any new nuclear plants, and place our focus on conservation and renewable energy. The NDP will exceed current government targets for renewable energy bringing over 10,700 MW online by 2018, and add at least 5,000 MW of additional green power by 2030. We will maintain the feed-in-tariff for small and community-based projects. For new larger renewable projects we will move towards public ownership. We are committed to improving conservation and investing in healthy, environmental solutions for the future of all Ontarians.

Ontario's New Democrats are unwavering in our dedication to an effective and accessible public healthcare system. We are proud to have worked with RNAO to strengthen nursing, improve awareness and action on the social determinants of health, and support solutions that will improve the health and wellbeing of all Ontarians. We look forward to our continued work with RNAO, today and following October 6th.

Sincerely,

Andrea Horwath
Leader, Ontario's New Democrats

