

NDP Response: Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario

If elected, will your party:

1. *Enforce the principles of the Canada Health Act and negotiate a new Health Accord with the provinces and territories, including increased health transfers?*

Yes

No

New Democrats are strong defenders of our cherished public healthcare system, founded by New Democrat Tommy Douglas. We know that our public healthcare system is under attack, between neglect and reckless cuts from the Conservatives and from those who want to privatize it. We will restore the federal leadership role that has been lacking under the Conservatives. New Democrats have committed to reverse Stephen Harper's reckless, unilateral cuts to healthcare funding and work collaboratively with the provinces and territories on developing a new set of health care agreements. We also believe the federal government has an important role to play in upholding the Canada Health Act and in working with the provinces and territories to adapt Medicare to the challenges of the 21st century.

2. *Expand our universally accessible, publicly funded, not-for-profit health-care system to include pharmacare?*

Yes

No

New Democrats have for years advocated for the goal of universal drug coverage in the best interest of Canadians. Drug therapies have evolved into an essential part of our 21st century health care system. Yet the Harper Conservatives have failed to provide the national leadership expected of them. Indeed, through their inaction, they have obstructed provincial and territorial efforts to cooperate in developing such a national plan. As a result, Canadians continue to pay more for prescription drugs than those in other OECD countries with costs varying depending on where you live.

New Democrats are committed to re-engaging with provinces and territories to create a new health accord and to working collaboratively on a national plan within our public health system to lower Canadians' costly output on drugs.

3. *Expand our universally accessible, publicly funded, not-for-profit health-care system to include home care?*

Yes

No

Home care has been on the NDP's 'to do' list as a missing piece of the health care mosaic ever since the Canada Health Act was established. It is an essential part of the health care continuum both on its own merits and, increasingly, as a cost saving option to institutional environments. We look forward to being in a position, as government, to further integrate home care into our national public health system. Our former health critic and Deputy Leader, Libby Davies, proposed one path to improved continuing care, including home care, in Bill C-545. We will continue to consult with provincial and territorial governments and other stakeholders on this and other options as we move forward on this important file.

4. *Reject efforts to privatize and/or commercialize the delivery of health care, including user fees, co-payments, means testing and medical tourism?*

Yes

No

Under both the Conservatives and the Liberals that preceded them, New Democrats have been waging a concerted battle to stop the hemorrhaging of our public health services to private, for-profit businesses. In government, we will continue that struggle with renewed vigor.

5. *Resurrect a commitment made by the First Ministers in 2003 to achieve 24/7 access to primary care delivered by interprofessional teams working to their full scope?*

Yes

No

Inter-professional teams have long been a core part of the New Democrat vision for health care, as evidenced in our support for community health centres. Working to their full scope, such collaborative teams offer Canadians a thorough and efficient health delivery alternative. This was recognized by First Ministers over a decade ago, but has, like other potential improvements to our system, withered away under years of Conservative neglect. New Democrats will initiate new health accord negotiations with the provinces and territories that will encompass such previous goals and commitments with a view to the future.

6. *Reverse cuts made to the Interim Federal Health Program, which provides limited temporary health-care benefits to refugee claimants?*

Yes

No

Many Canadians were astounded and disgusted at Stephen Harper's cuts to health supports for refugees – those fleeing for their lives and at their most vulnerable. That the Harper Conservatives would not totally reverse this move, even after being exposed and disciplined by the courts – of both justice and public opinion – is stunning. A New Democrat government will not balance its budgets on the backs of refugees and will move as quickly as possible to fully restore refugee health services.

7. *Reinstate the Health Council of Canada?*

Yes

No

The New Democratic Party has strongly condemned Stephen Harper's decision to cut off funding to the Health Council of Canada (HCC) and his misguided refusal to negotiate a new health accord with the provinces and territories. The HCC provided valuable monitoring of the 2004 Health Accord initiatives and we need to build on that experience. A New Democratic government is committed to negotiating a new health accord with the provinces and territories. The Health Council of Canada was a child of the 2004 Health Accord and we would include the resurrection or reformulation of a HCC-style body as part of that new intergovernmental discussion.

8. *Earmark funding for provinces and territories to increase registered nurse and nurse practitioner-to-population ratios?*

Yes

No

An NDP government will work with provinces and territories to share best practices and build a joint primary care roadmap to: put patients first; ensure value for money by putting health dollars where they have the most impact; and improve health outcomes. We will make every effort to ensure that adequate nurse-to-population ratios and the increased use of nurse practitioners are a significant part of this roadmap.

9. *Develop a national palliative care strategy that provides universally accessible services across the country?*

Yes

No

A national palliative care strategy has been and continues to be an essential component of the New Democratic Party vision of health care. In government, we will follow-up on actions that we have taken while in opposition.

These actions included a bill on continuing care (palliative, home, and long-term care) introduced by NDP Deputy Leader Libby Davies in 2013. Bill C-545 would have required the setting up of a special advisory committee to conduct a pan-Canadian assessment of Canadians' palliative care needs leading to the establishment, within two years, of national standards for delivering continuing care services based on an integrated model of health care delivery with transitions between different types of care and the provision of federal funding to help meet those standards.

Also, last year, NDP MP Charlie Angus won unanimous Parliamentary support for his motion, M-456, calling for a pan-Canadian strategy for palliative and end-of-life care:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should establish a Pan-Canadian Palliative and End-of-life Care Strategy by working with provinces and territories on a flexible, integrated model of palliative care that: (a) takes into account the geographic, regional, and cultural diversity of urban and rural Canada as well as Canada's First Nation, Inuit and Métis people; (b) respects the cultural, spiritual and familial needs of all Canadians; and (c) has the goal of (i) ensuring all Canadians have access to high quality home-based and hospice palliative end-of-life care, (ii) providing more support for caregivers, (iii) improving the quality and consistency of home and hospice palliative end-of-life care in Canada, (iv) encouraging Canadians to discuss and plan for end-of-life care.

There are currently no minimum or common standards for palliative care services. As government, we will work to address this issue.

10. *Develop a principled regulatory framework to implement the Supreme Court of Canada’s decision on assisted death?*

Yes

No

An NDP government under Tom Mulcair will make increased access to palliative care a priority, while taking immediate steps to implement the Supreme Court of Canada’s historic and unanimous Carter decision swiftly with balance, respect and sensitivity.

11. *Support affordable housing programs by increasing federal spending on those programs by \$2 billion annually?*

Yes

No

A decade of Harper Conservative rule has seen no federal effort to rectify the lack of affordable housing in Canada. Canada is the only major industrialized country without a national housing plan.

An NDP government would make housing more affordable by sustaining investment in Canada’s affordable housing agreements and by providing incentives for the construction of 10,000 affordable and market rental housing units. We have already announced significant investments in affordable housing – more than \$2 billion over 4 years for capital repairs, rent-geared-to-income subsidies, and construction of new affordable housing.

12. *Launch a comprehensive national poverty reduction strategy, with targets, timelines and sufficient investments?*

Yes

No

The NDP has a long commitment to a federal poverty reduction strategy. We are the only party to have proposed legislation to create such a strategy – legislation that was developed in consultation with low-income Canadians and anti-poverty groups. New Democrats will work with the provinces and territories to set goals and timelines for the strategy. We will make important federal investments to reduce poverty, including an increase in benefits such as the National Child Benefit Supplement and the Working Income Tax Benefit. We will also reform the Employment Insurance program to expand access so that workers don’t have to turn to social assistance when they are unemployed, restore the federal minimum wage and progressively raise it to \$15 an hour, and create a national affordable childcare program that ensures parents pay no more than \$15 a day.

13. *Adopt the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada to address the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of reconciliation?*

Yes

No

The New Democratic Party has stated its intention to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report.

14. *Implement aggressive national carbon pricing?*

Yes

No

A price on carbon is an important part of taking the action on climate change that is necessary for Canada to do its fair share to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. That's why the NDP has promised to make polluters pay for the pollution they create, through a cap and trade system that would help transition to a cleaner energy future.

The global community is going to hammer out a climate deal at the Paris Climate Conference this December, and Canada has to be there with a plan to reduce our emissions— a plan that will be unifying for the whole country. Tom Mulcair repeats often that he will be proud that one of his first official acts as Prime Minister of Canada will be to attend Paris 2015 with national targets for greenhouse gas reductions, and a plan to fight climate change.

15. *Commit to comprehensive greenhouse gas targets, including reductions to at least 25 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020, and at least 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050?*

Yes

No

As set out in Jack Layton's Climate Change Accountability Act, which was reintroduced in this Parliament, the NDP's target for Canada's greenhouse gas reductions is 80% below 1990 levels by 2050, and 34% by 2025. We are proud to have the strongest targets of any party, and the NDP has a concrete plan for Canada to meet our international obligation to address Climate Change.

16. *Develop an aggressive program to reduce the emission of toxic substances, and ensure that people are made aware of toxics in their homes, workplaces and the products they consume?*

Yes

No

New Democrats will strengthen regulations to prohibit the use and import of potentially harmful chemical substances in consumer items such as food and personal care products. We will expedite the re-assessment and regulation of priority toxins and pollutants to the most stringent international standards. We will adopt a precautionary approach to the future use of any new such substances.

17. *Ensure that all people and corporations pay their fair share of taxes?*

Yes

No

After years of fighting Conservative and Liberal corporate tax cuts and the consequent losses in federal programs and health care innovation opportunities, New Democrats will stop the corporate tax giveaway. We will also actively pursue those who try to dodge their legal tax obligations and apply recovered funds where they are needed most. As an example, the NDP will close a tax loophole currently enjoyed by CEOs on stock options and use the additional federal revenues to increase both the Working Income Tax Benefit and the National Child Benefit Supplement.

18. *Rely more heavily on green taxes that impose user fees on any activity that damages the environment?*

Yes

No

New Democrats will remove incentives for activities that cause pollution, like the \$1.2 billion subsidies for fossil fuels. Furthermore, we will enforce the polluter-pay principle, including making big emitters pay for the greenhouse gases they emit.

