

Canadian Nurses Association

Mike Villeneuve, CEO
50 Driveway
Ottawa, ON K2P 1E2

9 October 2019

Dear Mr. Villeneuve,

Thank you for writing, for providing us with the opportunity to speak to issues important to Canada's nurses and share the Green Party of Canada's platform, and for your advocacy.

Please find our responses below.

Best regards,

Julia Redmond
Policy Researcher
Green Party of Canada

1. Informal caregivers are enormously valuable to the Canadian healthcare system, saving it about \$9.6 billion each year. What will you do to support these hard-working and valuable caregivers?

In the short term, Green MPs will fight to expand tax refunds for caregivers and ensure that they can take the necessary leave without penalty. No one should have to bear the costs of caring for a family member alone.

We understand the immense effort undertaken by caregivers and are open to supporting them through a benefit program. We will consult with caregivers and employers to create a work environment where caregivers are not penalised for taking care of a loved one, exploring options to increase flexibility, EI and tax credits, and work sharing.

On long-term solutions that address the root causes of caregiver income insecurity, the Greens will implement a new universal guaranteed liveable income (GLI) program to replace the current array of income supports, such as disability payments, social assistance and income supplements for seniors.

Payment would be set at a “livable” level for different regions of the country. The negotiation to implement a livable income across the country would take place through the Council of Canadian Governments, a forum for high-level policy discussion among all orders of government. Unlike existing income support programs, additional income would not be clawed back.

The GLI would give caregivers the freedom to care for their loved ones, keep a job if they wish and ensure that they have sufficient funds to do so.

2. In 2015, more than 1 in 5 Canadians reported that they or someone in their home did not take their medications because of cost. What will you do to ensure that Canadians have affordable access to prescription medications?

We will make medications affordable by implementing a universal, single-payer national pharmacare program, which is urgently needed. No Canadian should have to make a choice between filling the prescriptions they need and paying rent or putting food on the table for their family. Greens were the first to call for a universal pharmacare system in Canada, and we remain committed to implementing such a program.

Universal pharmacare is the best way to accomplish both life-saving and cost-cutting goals. The Green Party would complement this program by creating bulk drug purchasing agency and shortening drug patent protection times. We would also apply the approach of the UBC Therapeutics Initiative to ensure the meticulous review of new medications before they are approved. This will certify the efficacy of new drugs and prevent registering drugs that hurt more people than they help.

We support the recommendations made by the Parliamentary Committee on Health to expand the Canada Health Act to include prescription drugs dispensed outside of a hospital, and we support the evidence and budgetary analysis on pharmacare from the non-partisan Parliamentary Budget Officer. However, greater federal leadership is needed to ensure these recommendations become a reality.

Medicine should not only be for those who can afford private insurance. The Green Party believes in a truly equitable health care system, which can only be achieved through the implementation of universal pharmacare.

3. In the home and community care sector, technology plays a central role in enabling remote patient monitoring and interventions in a patient’s home. This makes it easier for Canadians to access efficient, high-quality, and cost-effective health care remotely. How will you support technological innovation beyond hospital walls, including the scale-up and spread of existing technologies?

Greens are committed to closing the digital divide that currently exists in Canada. We recognize the potential for virtual care in improving health care delivery, and are committed to consulting with medical organizations to work towards more accessible services. We firmly believe that scientific research and innovation as being a core part of a green future, and enabling remote care through technology is in line with this vision.



Our commitment to a universal broadband strategy will help to improve much-needed internet access in northern and remote communities, paving the way for more reliable virtual care options that will help improve care delivery in these under-serviced regions.

4. We are seeing the negative effects of climate change on the health of Canadians already. Changing climate patterns are leading to the spread of infectious disease, cardiorespiratory impacts, longer allergy seasons, displacement-related mental health concerns, heat stroke, heat-related deaths, and more. What will you do to prevent and reduce the negative health effects of climate change?

It is vital that Canadians and healthcare providers understand that climate change is already having major effects on our health. Greens will ensure that climate change-related health concerns become a priority.

First and foremost, we will enshrine in law the right to a healthy environment. Formally recognizing this in law will provide a basis for Canadians to enforce the need to prevent and mitigate environmental harms that can and do negatively affect their health.

We will also reorient Health Canada's mandate to include a focus on the health risks of climate change, and will encourage medical associations to train health-care professionals to understand and engage with climate change-related health threats. Our national mental health strategy will help Canadians address growing anxieties, including those that are climate-related.

