

BACKGROUND

New Approaches to Providing Leadership to Health Delivery

Ensuring that every Islander has timely access to healthcare is the most important duty the government has to this province. Managing and overseeing a health system is not an easy task, but complexity is not an excuse for indifference or inaction.

In this election, the Liberal Party's platform, Healthcare First, sets improved healthcare access as the number one priority for Islanders.

Key elements of our healthcare platform include:

Premier to assume ministerial responsibility for healthcare for a two-year period: The Liberal Party believes that the crisis in healthcare is so pervasive that the office of the Premier needs to take on day-to-day Ministerial responsibility for healthcare for a minimum of two years to implement immediate measures to dramatically improve access to health services. This is a first in Canada, but we believe it is required to improve front-line service in the short-term while long-range planning is completed.

A New Patients' Rights Act that gives Islanders legal rights when it comes to timely access to healthcare services: The Liberal Party believes that Islanders deserve the right to timely, lawfully guaranteed access to healthcare services, regardless of where they live in PEI. This Act will define the expectations Islanders will have regarding accessing healthcare. Implementation and enforcement of the Act will be a ministerial responsibility accompanied by an independent officer of the Legislature to adjudicate complaints and recommend corrective and/or remedial action.

A dedicated minister and department for mental health and addictions: The complexity and demand of healthcare delivery is unworkable within the mandate of a single minister. The Liberal Party of PEI believes that mental health and addictions issues should be managed and addressed by a separate department. To this end, the Liberal Party would join several other jurisdictions in recognizing the unique and challenging task of the public's mental health needs by creating a dedicated department and minister.

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New recruitment/retention, nurses, doctors, and other health system workers: The band-aid approach of recent years does not work; we need a comprehensive, practical approach to recruiting and retaining nurses, doctors, and allied health workers. We believe there are real, underexplored opportunities for in-school/pre-practice recruitment, tuition/training subsidies, return-in-service grants, retention measures, and incentives to come out of retirement.

Access to new healthcare services and providers: A key way to improve healthcare is to make more of what we already have. The Liberal Party believes we can do this by embracing the full scope of practice of existing healthcare workers on PEI, as well as looking to new players that can be publicly funded. This would include expanding even further the scope of practice of pharmacists, nurse practitioners, and advance care paramedics in PEI to provide medical services to Islanders. At the same time, we would work with the nursing sector to introduce registered psychiatric nurses in PEI.

Expediting professional credential recognition, both foreign and domestic: Across all healthcare professional areas, we need to dramatically expedite approval of the credentials of healthcare providers that want – and are ready to work - in PEI. Whether they are Canadian or coming from outside the country, we need to do a better, faster job of evaluating and recognizing their credentials so they can stop waiting and start contributing to caring to Islanders.

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