

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Liberal Government to Expand Access to Physicians

CHARLOTTETOWN - Access to health care in PEI has reached a crisis point. The waitlist of Islanders needing a family physician has grown from 7,000 to 32,000 in just five years, an increase of 350 percent.

Today, PEI Liberal Leader Sharon Cameron announced that under Healthcare First, a Liberal government will expand access to physicians for Islanders struggling to access the healthcare system.

"I have gone tip to tip, and the one thing that I continue to hear day in, day out is that Islanders cannot access the health care system as they do not have a family doctor," said Cameron. "Islanders are increasingly worried about losing their family doctor or waiting on the list for years without a meaningful plan in sight needs to end."

The PEI Liberal Party's Healthcare First platform provides the vision and the plan to improve access to physicians for Islanders. A Liberal government will:

- Engage with the PEI Medical Society to undertake health human resource planning to identify physician supply and demand and to guide recruitment and retention planning;
- Expand opportunities for virtual care through Maple and other telemedicine/virtual-type initiatives.
- Expand the volume of walk-in clinics on an interim basis by incentivizing physicians to provide these services;
- Double scholarships/financial incentives/return in service grants to ensure Island students studying medicine in other provinces will find it attractive to return to PEI to practice;
- Establish return-in-service agreements for Island students studying at a Canadian University where the PEI government has purchased seats and double the number of medical residency seats, including four new seats for students studying outside of Canada.

"This government has failed to present Islanders with a vision or a plan for how it would increase their access to healthcare. It has tried to avoid accountability for its failings by calling a snap election," continued Cameron. "A Liberal government will balance long-term planning with immediate action to address the doctor shortage and improve access to care for Prince Edward Island."

HEALTHCARE *first*

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