



**POZITIVE
PATHWAYS**

Federal Election Advocacy 2021

Welcome,

For the last week Pozitive Pathways Community Services has attempted to engage the major party federal candidates in the upcoming election to advocate on behalf of the communities we service in Windsor-Essex/Chatham Kent. Our agency sent emails to each of the candidates in Windsor West, Windsor Tecumseh, Essex & Chatham-Kent-Leamington to bring to their attention key issues (listed below) that are impacting the HIV sector and the constituents in our region. Our agency also used various social media channels to also highlight key issues tagging candidates who where accessible.

In our engagement we focused on how the Government of Canada recently committed to international targets to ensure that 95% of those living with HIV are diagnosed, 95% are on treatment, and 95% are virally suppressed by 2030. At this time, Canada is well below these targets. A key question that we asked is how each party will be involved in achieving these targets and how will they work with Canada's HIV sector to ensure our success?

Key Issues we detailed to the candidates for awareness were:

1. Insufficient and stagnated funding for community-based HIV programs.
2. Delivering an anti-racist and equitable HIV response.
3. Treatment access and National Pharmacare.
4. Addressing the drug policy crisis
5. Affirming the health and human rights of sex workers

Please scroll through document to see response from 5 candidates below.

Regards,

Michael Brennan

Executive Director

Positive Pathways Community Services

Windsor West:



Response from NDP Candidate West (Incumbent): Brian Masse September 13th

Dear Mr. Brennan,

Thank you for your email and questions. I am including the party platform on these concerns for you below and I am fully committed to working with you moving forward to ensure that your concerns are addressed federally. Please know that I have worked in close partnership with the HIV/ Legal AIDS Network on all of their concerns and have brought them forward both at the federal and municipal level to make sure that we are doing everything possible to alleviate the concerns especially within our community.

Canada's community-based HIV/AIDS response is losing ground due to long-stagnated federal funding.

A New Democratic government will work in partnership with HIV organizations across Canada to ensure the federal action plan on HIV is fully resourced. We are committed to the global goal of ending the epidemic of HIV/AIDS by 2030. New Democrats have led the fight in Parliament against the Liberal government's cuts to community-based HIV organizations. We will end the erosion of federal support for Canada's HIV response.

In June 2019, NDP Health Critic Don Davies' motion calling for an increase in federal HIV funding to \$100 million annually was unanimously adopted by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health. This recommendation was put forward again by the NDP in the last session of Parliament and re-adopted by the Committee in March 2021. It's time for the federal government to follow through.

As well, Canada is a leader in innovative health research, a field that is more important than ever. We will work with universities and health professionals to make sure that public research on critical health issues continues to flourish.

Delivering an anti-racist HIV/AIDS response Canada is failing Indigenous, Black, and racialized people living with HIV.

Today, Indigenous and racialized people in Canada are facing a frightening evolution of hate. In communities across the country, racist discrimination and violence remain a reality, while extremist views are increasingly inescapable on the internet. As New Democrats, we recognize the inherent dignity of all people and the fact that racism hurts deeply, and diminishes the humanity of marginalized people. The impacts of hateful speech are real: Canada has seen a 200% increase in active hate groups in the last 5 years, with an increasing number of violent incidents targeting Muslim, Jewish and Black Canadians.

New Democrats believe that we cannot stand by and allow racism to flourish in our communities, putting lives at risk. It's time to choose: we must turn the talk of diversity into action to confront systemic racism, and put an end to it for good. We will work together to tackle hate, white supremacy and the systemic discrimination that's hurting people across the country.

Joyce's Principle will be the basis for a new approach to tackling systemic racism in health care under a New Democrat government. This principle is named for Joyce Echaquan, an Atikamekw woman who died tragically in hospital after suffering racist care. Joyce's Principle demands that all Indigenous people have an equal right to the highest standard of physical and mental health, with a right to access traditional medicines.

New Democrats will make sure that the federal government steps up to close the health gap in Indigenous communities, and supports Indigenous health self-determination. We recognize that healing the ongoing trauma caused by colonialism and residential schools will require long-term partnership and reliable, ongoing funding.

Treatment Access and National Pharmacare: Too many Canadians living with HIV do not have access to effective treatments.

Our National, Universal Pharmacare Plan includes every Canadian, no matter what kind of coverage they need - whether they are covered by private insurance already, or not. Our plan covers every prescription and care need including vision, dental and mental health supports and care. We introduced a bill this past parliament that the Liberal Government did not support.

New Democrats believe that we must do better than what exists now. Just as our party led the fight to establish universal public health care for all Canadians, we are leading the fight to expand Medicare – to include quality prescription drug coverage for everyone, regardless of your job, where you live, your age, your health status or how much money you make. We will begin working with the provinces right away to target a 2022 start date, with an annual federal investment of \$10 billion.

This will go hand in hand with developing a national strategy to cover drugs for rare diseases, so that coverage is no longer determined by where you live or what private insurance your family has, as is currently the case. A national pharmacare program means access to necessary medicines and medical devices in the same way that we currently have access to medical and hospital care – free at the point of care, financed by a public insurance system that covers everyone. It means that you'll need your health card – not your credit card – at the pharmacy till. And it puts an end to costly copayments, deductibles and premiums that cost families hundreds and even thousands a year. Making prescription drugs more affordable saves everyone money. Negotiating prices with big pharmaceutical companies brings down prices for everyone – saving money in our health care system that can be used to improve care.

Our plan will guarantee that every Canadian can get the medication they need. And it will mean big savings for employers who currently pay for employee benefits, helping to reward good employers and boost economic growth. It will also cost our system less overall, as a result of pooling the purchasing power of the entire country – freeing up much-needed funds for the provinces to re-invest in improving healthcare. Most importantly, our pharmacare plan will mean a healthier Canada where no one has to make the impossible choice between the medicine they need and other essentials, like rent and food.

Save lives with evidence-based drug policy Canada is in a drug policy crisis.

Decades of failed drug policy have caused incalculable harm to communities across Canada. In the last five years alone, we have lost over 20,000 loved ones to overdoses. Tragically, this staggering death toll has grown dramatically throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Criminalization, a toxic illicit supply and a lack of timely access to harm reduction, treatment and recovery services are driving this ongoing catastrophe. It's time for a new approach. NDP Response: HIV Legal Network A New Democratic government will introduce legislation to decriminalize substance use in Canada and expunge criminal records for possession.

We believe that the trauma and stigma caused by the criminalization of people who use drugs cannot be meaningfully addressed with half-measures. We will work with the provinces and territories to extend low-barrier access to a safe supply of regulated substances to every region of the country. This is essential to save lives.

We will also put in place a national strategy to ensure that harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services are available to all those who seek access. We will back up this plan with new and significant investments.

Affirming the health and human rights of sex workers.

New Democrats support a harm reduction and human rights-based approach that empowers sex workers and protects their health and safety. We will fulfill the required legislative review of the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act. It's profoundly disappointing that this analysis has not been completed to date. The federal government's failure to act is putting people's lives at risk. Sex workers have been operating in dangerously unsafe conditions since this legislation was adopted and we must take immediate steps to help them stay safe.

Our party will also:

- New Democrats believe it's time to take a fully health-based approach to substance use in Canada. Needle exchange programs have proven to be a safe and effective way to prevent infectious disease transmission. We support the implementation of this important harm reduction initiative across all federal prisons. We are troubled by the federal government's lack of transparency on the program to date – particularly with respect to its suspension at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- New Democrats agree that legal reform is urgently needed to end unjust prosecutions related to HIV non-disclosure. We believe that communicable diseases are most effectively addressed through public health measures, not criminalization. We will take action to decriminalize HIV non-disclosure as an essential first step in the fight to eradicate HIV/AIDS. And we will work with the provinces and territories develop consistent policy with respect to the limited circumstances where prosecution is appropriate, such as cases of intentional and malicious transmission.

Again, thank you for reaching out to me on this and please know that I will always advocate on your behalf. I look forward to working with you moving forward.

Yours truly,

Brian Masse
NDP Candidate for
Windsor West



Response from Conservative Candidate West: Anthony Orlando – September 8th.

Thank you for taking the time to write to us,

Universal Health Care

- Canada's Conservatives are 100% committed to the principle of universal healthcare access.
- That's why Canada's Recovery Plan includes increases to provincial healthcare funding.
- Unlike Trudeau, Erin O'Toole and Anthony Orlando stand by their words.
- Justin Trudeau called an election during a delta-driven fourth wave that gets worse with every day.
- If Justin Trudeau and the Liberals were serious about healthcare, they wouldn't have called an election in the middle of a serious health crisis.

Mental Health Action Plan

- The pandemic has deepened Canada's mental health crisis, especially for our youth. It's estimated that one in five Canadians have suffered from depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Canada's Conservatives will address the mental health crisis by recognizing that mental health is health and making historic investments to help those in need.
- With the Canada Mental Health Action Plan, Canada's Conservatives will:
 - o Massively boost health transfers to the provinces by at least six per cent annually, doubling the Liberal commitment and representing nearly \$60 billion more for health care over the next 10 years.
 - o Work with the provinces to invest in mental health as the priority it is with the goal

of providing enough funding through health transfers for an additional million Canadians to receive mental health treatment every year.

- o Encourage employers to add mental health coverage to their employee benefit plans or boost their coverage by offering a tax credit for 25 per cent of the cost of additional mental health coverage for the first three years.
- o Provide \$150 million over three years in grants to non-profits and charities delivering mental health and wellness programming.
- o Create a nationwide three-digit suicide prevention hotline.
- o Make the single largest investment in Canadian history for mental health supports for Indigenous people by providing \$1 billion over five years to boost funding for Indigenous mental health and drug treatment programs, including providing culturally appropriate supports.

Addressing the Opioid Crisis

- Every day, 17 Canadians die from opioid-related deaths. Since the onset of COVID-19, opioid-related deaths have almost doubled.
- Families across this country are mourning lost children, lost parents, lost partners, Canada's Conservatives will treat the opioid epidemic as the urgent health crisis that it is.
- To help those struggling with addiction and save lives, Canada's Recovery Plan will:
 - o Invest \$325 million over the next three year to create 1,000 residential drug treatment beds and build 50 recovery community centres across the country.
 - o Enhance the delivery of culturally appropriate addiction treatment and prevention services in First Nations communities with high needs.
 - o Provide \$1 billion over five years to boost funding for Indigenous mental health and drug treatment programs.
 - o Partner with the provinces to ensure that Naloxone kits are available for free across Canada.
 - o Reorient the Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy towards ensuring that every person struggling with addiction has the opportunity to recover.
- As a country, we must recognize that mental health is health. Only Canada's Conservatives have a plan to make historic investments in mental health and addiction.

Health Transfers

- Under an Erin O'Toole led government, Canadians will be able to count on stable and predictable health and social program funding.
- It is critical for Canadians to have confidence that these programs will be there for them when they need them.
- Justin Trudeau's out of control spending is putting healthcare funding at risk. He will be forced to raise taxes or cut funding to important social services like health care.

ESSEX:



**Response from Conservative Candidate Essex : Chris Lewis
(incumbent) Campaign – September 9th.**

Dear Michael:

Thank you for contacting the campaign office of Chris Lewis with this important information.

You are correct in saying there is not enough being done for this issue and in many ways with COVID-19 and the opioid crisis this issue is not getting the attention that is needed. We will of course keep this detailed outline of the needs in mind moving forward. Health care reform is part of our current platform with a universal health care plan under which we would hope some if not most of these issues would be addressed. Of course a lot of the Federal role is to release funds to the Province to deal with Health Care issues and many of your points would fall under the Provincial Minister of Health's decisions on what to do with that money.

Please do get back to us after the election and if we have the honour of forming a government we will of course consider these points in our new context.

CPC Universal Health Care

- Canada's Conservatives are 100% committed to the principle of universal healthcare access.
- That's why Canada's Recovery Plan includes increases to provincial healthcare funding.

Kind regards,

Steven Hanratty

Campaign Policy Advisor
P.O. Box 33 Essex ON N8M 2Y1
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**Response from NDP Candidate Essex : Tracey Ramsey
(incumbent) Campaign – September 12th.**

How will you and your party be involved in achieving these targets and how will you work with Canada's HIV sector to ensure our success?

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New Democrats have led the fight in Parliament against the Liberal government's cuts to community-based HIV organizations. We will end the erosion of federal support for Canada's HIV response. In June 2019, NDP Health Critic Don Davies' motion calling for an increase in federal HIV funding to \$100 million annually was unanimously adopted by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health. This recommendation was put forward again by the NDP in the last session of Parliament and re-adopted by the Committee in March 2021. It's time for the federal government to follow through.



Response from Liberal Candidate Essex (via FB) : Audrey Festeryga – September 15th.

Audrey Festeryga

Hi Micheal- I can't say that I or my campaign received an email on this. I would suggest that the Liberal party platform is very clear that all Canadians deserve access to universal healthcare, in fact, need better access to our healthcare system and family doctor and support moving forward for a more equal Canada. I personally am supportive and if elected will lend my voice to advancing/renewing commitment to action.

Michael Brennan

Thank You Audrey for responding. We appreciate you taking the time from your schedule to reply. I have sent you a DM as to the email address that we sent our inquiries around the HIV & Drug Policy issues. If this is incorrect, please let us know and we would be more than happy to resend.
