

Strengthening child and youth mental health and mental health care

If elected, what will your party do to improve access to publicly funded mental health treatment and resources for children and youth living with mental health issues or developmental disabilities?

The NDP PEI believes in a well-funded comprehensive universally accessible, public healthcare system which ensures that all Canadians have equal access to health services.

The NDP PEI will work to improve health services for children and youth living in PEI with mental health issues or developmental disabilities. Strategies we will adopt will include, but will not be limited to, the following:

The Disability Support Program which provided families with financial support to meet their child's disability-related needs has recently been replaced by the AccessAbility program. This change was made with a view to providing families with more individualized funding and giving disability access workers more flexibility when planning and providing funding to their clients. For the first time children with mental health related disabilities are eligible for the program. The NDP PEI will assess the impact of these changes on Island families and work to improve supports, both financial and social where they are inadequate.

The NDP PEI will assess the impact of the well-being teams in Island schools at the high school level and work towards implementing similar teams of professionals in elementary schools. These teams include social workers, youth workers and nurses and could also include psychologists.

The NDP PEI will ensure that there are adequate services for children at all community-based mental health services across the province.

The NDP PEI will provide more resources to support young people transition out of the STRENGTH program. Often the transition back into the community can be the hardest part of the road to health.

The NDP PEI will support the development of a new Dr.of Psychology Program at UPEI. This new program will hire 6 new faculty members and contribute to a more vibrant professional community for psychologists and offer young psychologists a more supportive environment within which to practice.

The NDP will provide stable funding to the Native Council of PEI to provide culturally appropriate mental health services to Indigenous people, including children, who live off-reserve on Prince Edward Island.

The NDP PEI will provide a full range of services to meet the health needs of young transgender people and qualified personnel to provide assessments and support.

The NDP PEI will review funding for advocacy organizations such as the PEI Association for Community living to strengthen their capacity to advocate on behalf of families and children with intellectual disabilities.

The NDP PEI has a policy of making health promotion and disease prevention a priority within health care policy. We will improve access, particularly for those living on low incomes, to programs and activities (nutrition, exercise, etc.) that support healthy living. We will also integrate environmental and outdoor education into the school curriculum

Supporting families and children in need

If elected, what will your party do to reduce rates of childhood poverty and ensure safer homes, schools and communities for all children and youth in PEI?

The NDP-PEI recognizes that income, housing, transportation and social inclusion are significant determinants of mental and physical health. Ensuring that every resident of Prince Edward Island has a livable income and investing in strong public programs and services are essential elements of any plan to improve people's health and wellbeing.

Experiences of inequality and marginalization also affect a child's sense of well-being.

The NDP PEI will:

- a) Implement, in cooperation with the federal government, a Basic Income Guarantee pilot project
- b) Immediately increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour and increase it to \$17 within four years, leading to an indexed minimum wage
- c) Increase Social Assistance Rates so that they match the real costs of living and continue to evaluate them on an annual basis
- d) Introduce a new tax bracket to for the highest income earners and increase the provincial portion of the HST rebate which goes to the more than 45,000 residents of PEI who live on the lowest incomes.
- e) Invest in more publicly owned, non-profit and cooperative housing which will provide more rent/geared-to-income units for low-income families and individuals.
- f) Invest in a school nutrition program, based on locally produced food, available to all students in the public school system
- g) Invest in a universal publically funded childcare system. The PEI NDP is currently looking at models in Quebec and British Columbia which offer childcare at a flat rate per day in the \$10-15 range. We will lobby the federal government to implement a national childcare program to provide funding.
- h) Invest in an Island-wide publically owned and operated, affordable, public transit system.
- i) Continue to support services for victims of domestic violence and create a specific court process for domestic violence cases with a judge or judges with training in family violence. This will make the process of prosecuting domestic violence offenders less stressful and more satisfactory for Island families.

- j) Increase tenants' rights with regard to security of tenure and enforcing standards of repair and maintenance

Nurturing early child development

If elected, what will your party do to strengthen evidence-based early child development services and programs and ensure access to quality education and healthcare for families and children?

Child development services

The NDP PEI will invest in a universal publicly funded childcare system. The PEI NDP is currently looking at models in Quebec and British Columbia which offer childcare at a flat rate per day in the \$10-15 range. We will lobby the federal government to implement a national childcare program to provide funding.

As a program like this will take time to develop and roll out, the NDP PEI is committed to raising the ceiling for eligibility for child care subsidies and increasing the amount of the subsidy immediately. This will ensure greater access to child care services in the interim.

The NDP PEI will increase the wages of early childhood educators and other childcare centre staff by \$7 per hour. This will make these jobs more attractive, reduce staff turnover and keep early childhood educators on the Island.

Quality education

The NDP PEI believes that education must be delivered as a public service to ensure equal access to quality education. Our schools and post-secondary institutions should offer students at all stages of their learning opportunities to explore the natural and built world around them, to be creative and to think critically, and to develop a sense of belonging and social responsibility.

In particular, the NDP PEI will:

- a) Provide support for students who struggle to keep up with the pace of instruction in class, including publicly funded extra after-school tutoring (which would not be intended to replace instruction in class)
- b) Ensure that all children in the public school system have access to the level of support they need in order to learn and participate

Health care

The NDP PEI believes that Islanders have the right to receive publicly funded and high quality health care. We have been concerned with the creeping trend toward private provision of certain health care services. We will return home care services to the public sector and ban the scheme whereby Islanders have to pay a \$5 fee to reserve a place at the head of the line for attention at walk-in clinics. If this service is provided, it should be provided free of charge to all residents regardless of ability to pay.

PEI has a shortage of front line staff in medical facilities as well as in preventive programs (such as community kitchens and exercise programs). We will work to recruit more health professionals, including doctors and nurse practitioners. We believe that by making rural communities more livable with more affordable housing, public transit and quality childcare centers young health practitioners are more likely to want to make PEI home.