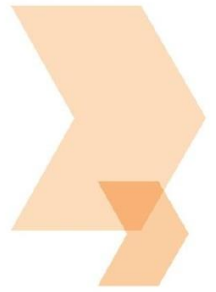




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August 10, 2021

Kelly Wilson Cull  
Director, Advocacy  
Canadian Cancer Society

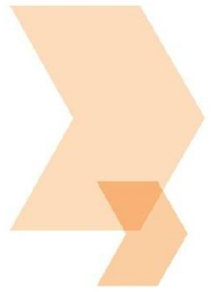
Dear Ms. Wilson Cull,

Thank you for reaching out and giving us the chance to talk about these important issues. As requested, please find below our responses to the survey you provided. For further details on many of these commitments as well as other areas of our plan, please see our vision document, *Something Better for Nova Scotia*, available at <https://www.nsndp.ca/something-better-nova-scotia>.

**1. If elected, will your Party make the Nova Scotia Palliative Care Strategy a priority and fund the strategy?**

The NDP believes strongly in the need for integrated delivery of care throughout the health care system and to ensure that people can both live and die with dignity. The Palliative Care Strategy is a very valuable starting point for where we need to go from here and an NDP government would look to this strategy as it picks up the work of ensuring access to appropriate care across the province.

While our hospital workers go above and beyond to provide compassionate care, as you rightly note, most people facing terminal illness would prefer not to die in hospital. The NDP is committed to building a single long-term care room for every person who needs one, and to expanding the range of services available through home care. These investments, along with continued dialogue with stakeholders like the Canadian Cancer Society, will help ensure that every person gets the opportunity to spend the end of their lives in an appropriate setting.



**2. If elected, will your Party commit to fully funding a plan to address all backlogs in cancer care from COVID-19 as well as the influx of new or late-stage cancer diagnosis forthcoming?**

Our health care system as a whole is at a breaking point, and this was true even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Understaffing and overcrowding in emergency rooms has backed up the health care system, and wait times for many non-emergency procedures have skyrocketed.

Both of these issues have sent shockwaves across the health care system, affecting thousands of people directly and indirectly. For example, hospital beds may be occupied by people who actually need long-term care, which results in less capacity for those awaiting vital procedures. Emergency rooms also currently work like a catch-all funnel for many patients who do not have family doctors or access to mental health services. These effects are felt even more acutely in rural areas, which have less capacity to start with.

The Liberals will cut \$209 million from the programs and services that Nova Scotians rely on. They have said that they will cut from COVID-19 spending, but we know that we need continued investment in our health system to clear backlogs from the pandemic -- there will be many health expenses post-COVID-19.

The NDP is committed to making the investments in health care that are necessary to ensure that cancer patients, as well as all other people in Nova Scotia, can confidently rely on our health care system to take care of them. That's why an NDP government would ensure that our entire health care system is working as it should.

We commit to:

- Building a single long-term care room for every person who needs one so that our hospitals are not overcrowded by people who are better served in a different level of care, freeing up beds for other patients.





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- Improving access to emergency mental health services and establishing teams for emergency response to mental health crises, so people have more options before resorting to the ER.
- Publishing emergency department standards regularly, so that there can be transparency in emergency health care.
- Keeping emergency services available at the New Waterford and Northside General Hospitals, limiting the wait times for ambulances in Cape Breton, and investing in Cape Breton health units to enable more local decision making.
- Eliminating fees for ambulance services. No one should ever have to choose between their physical or mental health and the health of their finances.

**3. If elected, will your Party commit to ensuring that any settlement with the tobacco industry include significant public health measures to reduce tobacco use and not just financial compensation?**

The NDP has long supported public health measures to reduce tobacco use. One recent example is in 2014, when the NDP introduced a bill to ban flavoured tobacco. Just over five months later, the Liberal government followed our lead and introduced their own bill to do so, writing the policy into law.

We would instruct provincial lawyers to explore the option of including public health measures as part of the settlement. If this proves untenable, we would also explore setting aside a portion of the financial settlement for such measures.

**4. If elected, will your Party commit to extending Job Protective Leave from the current 3 days to at least 26 weeks to align with the federal Employment Insurance sickness benefit?**



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The NDP believes that no one should ever have to choose between their health and their job. For this reason, we have committed to adding 10 permanent paid sick days to the *Labour Standards Code* and making it illegal for employers to require a doctor's note when taking time off for illness.

An NDP government will be willing to collaborate with the Canadian Cancer Society to explore other ways to ensure that people can take the time they need to recover from illness without the stress of potentially losing their job.