



August 10, 2021

Kelly Wilson Cull
Director, Advocacy
Canadian Cancer Society
Via email: Kelly.Cull@cancer.ca

Dear Kelly,

I am pleased to respond to our questionnaire as follows:

1. Access to quality palliative care

The Canadian Cancer Society recommends that all parties commit to updating the provincial palliative care strategy and improving access to quality palliative care for the people of Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia government can improve access to quality palliative care by:

- **Updating and refreshing the Integrated Palliative Care Strategy;**
- **Providing funding for an adequate number of speciality palliative care staff including palliative care nurses and palliative care social workers across the province;**
- **Investing in resources to deliver palliative care within the home and within long term care settings (i.e., hospital beds);**
- **Strengthen caregiver supports, particularly related to grief and bereavement; and**
- **Improving data collection to better measure and report on palliative and end-of-life care in Nova Scotia.**

Question: If elected, will your Party make the Nova Scotia Palliative Care Strategy a priority and fund the strategy?

The PC Party is committed to improving access and the delivery of healthcare; this includes Palliative Care. The PC Party's commitment to legislating 4.1 hours of care per resident in long-term care facilities will make a huge difference in the care received by all residents. We are committed to meeting with all stakeholders to better understand how to make the Nova Scotia Palliative Care Strategy work to its full potential. The PC Party is also committed to better data collection across the entire health care system.

2. COVID-19 and cancer care

The Canadian Cancer Society recommends that all parties commit to working with provincial governments and the cancer community on a fully funded plan to address all backlogs in cancer care from COVID-19 as well as the influx of new or late-stage cancer diagnoses forthcoming.

Question: 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?

The PC Party is committed to eliminating backlogs across healthcare, and we are cognizant of the stress experienced by the Cancer Society and people living with cancer. We previously called for people receiving cancer treatments to be prioritized in procedures and vaccinations.

3. Tobacco settlement negotiations

The Nova Scotia Government is currently engaged in a lawsuit with the tobacco industry, to recover health care costs associated with tobacco use. The Canadian Cancer Society recommends that all parties commit to the inclusion of significant public health measures in the settlement agreement.

Question: 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?

Previous PC governments led the way on the commitment to smoking cessation programs. In 2004, the Office of Health Promotion launched the “Sick of Smoke” workplace program. In 2005, the PC government of the day introduced amendments to the Smoke-Free Places Act that banned smoking in all indoor public areas, workplaces, and eating and drinking establishments in Nova Scotia. It is our goal to expand upon this legacy. Programs like our Chronic Illness Treatment and Prevention Plan will help address some of the side effects and impacts of smoking. However, given the high percentage of Nova Scotians who smoke, more must be done to encourage those individuals to stop smoking. Our PC government will offer a virtual care program to anyone wishing to stop or cut back on their tobacco use (including the use of e-cigarettes). Similar to the programming we will offer to anyone without a family physician, we will establish an anti-tobacco virtual care service whereby anyone seeking guidance on how to quit, support throughout the quitting process or even get general information, can login at any time to receive the support they need. This program will be heavily advertised in schools to target youth and provide additional support to help students stop smoking at a younger age.

Information about this program will be provided in health classes across all schools in Nova Scotia.

4. Expand job protected illness leave

The Canadian Cancer Society recommends that all parties commit to extend the length of sickness leave job protection from the current 3 days to at least 26 weeks to align with Employment Insurance sickness benefit. This will help to ensure that those who are facing a life-threatening disease such as cancer can take critical time off work to receive treatment and to heal.

Question: 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?

The PC Party recognizes the impact that a cancer diagnosis has on someone's life, and job security should be the least of their worries. We are committed to meeting and discussing the details around extending job protected leave.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Tara Miller', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Tara Miller
Campaign Co-Chair
PC Party of Nova Scotia