

Questions for Candidates

Here are some questions on the key issues to protect and improve public health care. You can help by picking a couple to ask your local provincial election candidates when they come to your door or in All-Candidates Meetings in your community.

1. Ontario's acute and chronic care hospital beds have been cut in half since 1990. In fact, more than 18,500 hospital beds have been cut. We now have the fewest beds per person of any province in the country. Hospital funding has been shrinking as a proportion of health care spending since at least 1980. Hospitals are overcrowded and waits in emergency departments are far too long. The cuts have gone too far and improving home care alone is not enough to solve these serious problems. Will you commit to improving hospital funding and restore hospital beds and services?
2. Families and residents in Ontario's long-term care homes (nursing homes) are suffering because these homes do not provide enough nursing and personal support care to meet residents' daily needs. Will you commit to establishing a minimum care standard of at least 3.5 hours of daily care for residents in these homes?
3. There are 10,000 people on wait lists for home care and even more are declined access to care. While home care funding has increased, it has not kept pace with patients downloaded out of hospitals. Will you commit to improving home care funding and improving access to this vital care?
4. Private for-profit clinics put profits before patient care — reducing quality of cleaning, charging user fees, and siphoning scarce doctors and health professionals out of local hospitals. For profit nursing homes have lobbied against regulated minimum care standards, even while raking in record profits. For profit home care companies have undermined working conditions for home visiting nurses and PSWs to the point of severe staffing shortages and extraordinary staff turnover. Will you commit to building all new capacity in the public non-profit system and stop privatization?
5. Home care competitive bidding has ushered in the for-profit privatization of this sector and has dramatically increased administrative costs. Will you commit to ending competitive bidding and bring in a public non-profit home care system as exists in every other province in Canada?
6. Will you commit to ensuring that hospital patients are not discharged from hospitals, or coerced to leave, without care in place?
7. There are 23,000 people on wait lists for long-term care (nursing home) beds across Ontario. For-profit nursing home companies have reneged on building beds in a number of communities, delaying the opening of new beds for years. In an attempt to protect and increase their profits, these same companies have lobbied against establishment of clear care standards that would ensure a minimum 3.5 hours of care per resident per day. They want more money with fewer strings attached. Will you speed up the opening of new beds and ensure that these are public and non-profit?
8. Smaller and rural hospitals are under threat of closure or dramatic cuts across Ontario. Will you commit to protecting acute and emergency care services in small and rural hospitals?
9. Will you commit to expanding public models of front-door medicine including community health centres, nurse practitioners, and aboriginal health centres?
10. What concrete commitments will your party make to improve access to nurse practitioners, family health teams and family doctors in underserved areas and in those areas where all the local physicians are aging?

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