

# Voter's Guide

## Where the Political Parties Stand on the Key Health Care Issues

Key Health Issue	Liberal Party	New Democratic Party	Progressive Conservative Party
<b>Overcrowded hospitals— Restore hospital beds &amp; services, Address staffing shortages</b>	Planned hospital funding is set too low to protect existing services. Ongoing corporate tax cuts are reducing the provincial budget available to fund public services. More bed cuts and closures are on the horizon unless voters pressure for a stop to cuts and a clear promise to restore closed beds and improve access.	Funding unclear. The NDP promises to cut ER wait times in half but there is no clear plan to restore closed hospital beds and services. Voters need to pressure candidates to make firm commitments.	The PC Party commits to reducing ER wait times but there is no clear promise to restore closed hospital beds and services. We are concerned that PC promises for more tax cuts have to be paid for somehow. Unspecified cuts to public services are on the horizon unless voters pressure for a clear promise to restore closed beds and improve access in our local public non-profit hospitals. (See note under "Keep Health Care Public")
<b>Huge wait lists for long-term care homes (nursing homes). Keep long-term care public and non-profit. Set a minimum care standard guaranteeing 3.5 hours of care per day for residents in long-term care homes.</b>	Plans include a slow increase in new beds and renovations for older beds but not enough to offset the hospital cuts. New beds will continue to be privatized to for-profit corporations unless voters pressure for all new beds to be built in public and non-profit homes. There is currently no promise to improve hours of care.	The NDP promises to increase access to long term care but there is no clear promise on how many beds, nor on whether they would be public and non-profit or private and for-profit. No promise to improve hours of care.	Plans are for a slow increase in new beds and renovations for older beds but not enough to offset the hospital cuts. New beds will continue to be privatized to for-profit corporations unless voters pressure for all new beds to be built in public and non-profit homes. There is currently no promise to improve hours of care.
<b>Improve access to public non-profit home care</b>	Modest funding for home care will not reduce wait lists. The Liberal government has increased the amount of home care that people are allowed to get but inadequate funding means that many still don't get the care they need. Very slow progress on provincial standards for access to care. No commitment to build a public non-profit home care system. Voters need to pressure for improvements.	The NDP promises to improve access to home care and has opposed for-profit privatization of home care. They promise a review of the home care system, but voters need to pressure for a clear promise to create a stable public non-profit home care system.	Modest funding for home care that will not reduce wait lists. The Conservatives brought in the for-profit privatization of home care in the early 1990s. Voters need to pressure for a clear promise to increase home care and create a public non-profit home care system.
<b>Keep health care public and non-profit</b>	The Liberal government has stopped for-profit hospitals and clinics for the most part. But they continue to privatize long-term care and home care and cut public hospital services. Voters need to put pressure on to stop this. The Liberals have also enabled for-profit retirement homes to take an expanded role in the health care system including having locked units for elderly patients with dementia in violation of fundamental human rights.	Clear support for public non-profit hospitals and home care. Not clear on long term care beds (nursing homes). Promise to study home care privatization, but no clear promise to roll back the privatization in home care and build a public non-profit home care system.	The current Conservative platform does not make any promises either way on privatization. However, in the last provincial election, this party ran on a platform of for-profit privatization of health care services. Under the previous Harris government, privatization of long-term care homes and homecare was deepened and for-profit hospital clinics were introduced. For-profit MRI clinics siphoned scarce technologists out of local public hospitals, worsening shortages and reducing public MRI hours. We are concerned and encourage voters to push for a clear promise to keep health care public and stop privatization.
<b>Protect rural health care</b>	No promise.	No promise.	Promise to restore Emergency Department and acute beds in Fort Erie, Niagara. No promises on other small and rural hospitals.
<b>Improve access to front-line care, with an emphasis on public service models — increase community health centres, nurse practitioners, family health teams and family doctors in areas that are underserved.</b>	The Liberal government has increased medical school enrolment for family doctors, introduced nurse-led clinics, opened community health centres and increased family health teams. Need clear promises for help in underserved areas & where all physicians are aging.	The NDP promises to forgive student loans for physicians that locate in underserved areas as well as an expansion in family health teams. Need clear promises to approve the expansion of community health centres.	The PCs promise to encourage new graduates to locate in underserved areas. There are few details in their election platform. Voters need to pressure for clear promises and a commitment to support public models of service delivery.