

Seaway Valley Community Health Centre reached out to the five federal candidates in the upcoming federal election (for the City of Cornwall, Stormont, Dundas and South Glengarry) to gain a better understanding of their vision and action plan in regards to issues related to the health and wellbeing of local people. We asked the following three questions:

1) *What gaps do you see in our community that stop people from being healthy? What steps can we take after the election to build a healthier community here in the City of Cornwall, Stormont--Dundas--South Glengarry (Ontario)?*

Green Party of Canada – Raheem Aman

- It is very hard to find a family doctor that is accepting new patients. My wife and I travel all the way to Limoges for our doctor due to the shortage of doctors. After the election, we can enjoy pharmacare and dental care being added to our universal health care benefits. We can get proactive by encouraging healthy lifestyles and food options. With the federal funding we need, we can finally enjoy a better quality of life.

Liberal Party of Canada – Heather Megill

- Many of us do not get enough exercise and have poor eating habits. We need to slow down and focus on simplifying our lives. I believe we need to organize our lives where we incorporate daily exercise like walks with family or friends, or gardening together. We need to spend time together preparing meals and sharing it together away from the distractions of cell phones and televisions. We need to learn to grow our own food in our own gardens and share the bounty with friends and food banks and community agencies. Less driving and more walking and cycling will benefit our climate and our waistlines.

NDP – Kelsey Catherine Schmitz

- I believe access to services, and ongoing supportive care, to be two issues our citizens are currently facing that impacts their ability to be healthy. It is quite difficult to secure a family doctor, for example, and folks are only seeing one when they must go to a walk in clinic or the emergency room. Instead of being proactive about our healthcare, we become reactive. Hospitals see people at their worst. We need to ensure folks have ongoing care that ensures their well being is the focus. This is not only an issue with healthcare, but also mental health. We must advocate for funding to ensure anyone in crisis has access to ongoing care that they need, without wait times.

People's Party of Canada – Sabile Trimm

- I believe that many of the health problems today, such as obesity, anxiety and depression which are plaguing our society are due to overwork. It is far too common to see people working 50 hours per week or more just to make ends meet. Wages are stagnant while expenses keep rising. We must fix the economy and cut taxes drastically. It's not just being responsible but it's the ethical thing to do. The People's Party will balance the budget in two years. No one else is offering that.

Conservative Party of Canada

- At time of posting, no response provided by this candidate.

2) Canada is the only country in the world with a universal, public healthcare system that doesn't also include coverage of prescription medications -- and we pay the price. Our current patchwork of public and private drug plans results in higher drug prices and major gaps in coverage and access. That is why numerous academic and government reports, including the recent Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare, have all recommended implementation of a universal, public Pharmacare program that aligns with our universal public healthcare system.

Do you support an implementation timeline and scope for Pharmacare that at least meet the recommendations tabled in the Final Report of the Advisory Council on Implementation of National Pharmacare?

Green Party of Canada – Raheem Aman

- Yes. It is a shame that Canadians do not have Pharmacare. The Green Party 100% supports this action, as well as adding dental care into the auspices of universal health care. We can't afford NOT to.

Liberal Party of Canada – Heather Megill

- Yes. Canada is unlucky that we live right next the United States where a Public Health Care System is seen as a burden. We are bombarded with comparisons to the US of wait times for procedures but seem to avoid the facts that so many Americans are unable to access the help they need due to their inability to pay for it. We hear complaints about the costs of drugs yet our drugs are less costly than they are in the US but vastly more expensive than they are in other countries where Pharmacare and a public Health care system exists. By adopting Pharmacare we will be able to Bulk buy medications and this will cause our drug costs to fall. People with life threatening diseases such as cancer, diabetes and complex health conditions will be able to focus on getting better and not on how to buy their medicines. Pharmacare needs to be in place for Canadians to have a world class Healthcare system that supports everyone.

NDP – Kelsey Catherine Schmitz

- Yes. The NDP has a costed platform approach to ensuring all residents of Canada have access to Universal Pharmacare. The idea that a country like Canada can have people living here who have to choose between asthma medication, or insulin, and paying their mortgage is ridiculous.

- Proactive healthcare means we can help cover medication costs, and therefore keep people healthy, and avoid burdens on the system.

People's Party of Canada – Sabile Trimm

- No. I absolutely agree that we need pharmacare. It doesn't make sense to have a public health system without it. In fact, many health issues and emergencies could be prevented if people took their medicines. However, healthcare is a provincial jurisdiction. The federal government participates through health transfers but doesn't implement the programs. The People's Party of Canada will allow the provinces to collect the GST for themselves, which they can use for healthcare. As Ontarians, we should be demanding it from our provincial government. There is nothing stopping us from implementing it in Ontario. When I lived in Quebec, I had pharmacare through the province. If you let the federal government meddle in this area, you increase the bureaucracy and inefficiency of the service.

Conservative Party of Canada

- At time of posting, no response provided by this candidate.

3) Have you ever experienced dental pain? What would you do if you were 1 of the 6 million Canadians who can't afford to see a dentist for treatment? What steps will your party take to help get people out of dental pain and ensure dental care for all?

Green Party of Canada – Raheem Aman

- I have absolutely experienced dental pain. Wisdom teeth pain is no joke. I am 1 of the 6 million Canadians who can't afford to see a dentist for treatment. The Green Party will create free dental care for low-income Canadians.

Liberal Party of Canada – Heather Megill

- We know that untreated dental problems can lead to serious health impacts. I absolutely believe we need a Public Dental care plan. We need to study how to introduce it in Canada. As a teacher I have often seen children with severely impacted oral health. I often hear of elderly people on fixed incomes who cannot afford to pay for necessary dental treatment. Young people still in school or trying to get good paying jobs also struggle to pay for dental checkups and care. We need to implement Universal Public Dental care programs in Canada.

NDP – Kelsey Catherine Schmitz

- As an adult, I have had dental insurance only 2 years of the 12 years I have been out of university. I have gone 8 years without seeing a dentist. I am grateful every day I have not needed serious dental intervention, but know many people who have. It is not only painful and debilitating to them, but can cause serious health issues. The NDP supports universal dental care. The first year of governance under an NDP government would see the roll out of free dental care for anyone making under \$70,000 a year. We will increase that access with each successive year.

People's Party of Canada – Sabile Trimm

- Good dental hygiene isn't just a matter of health, it's a barrier for people to climb out of poverty. People with bad teeth face discrimination when looking for jobs. I believe that dental care should be provided by the provincial government because it pertains to health.

Conservative Party of Canada

- At time of posting, no response provided by this candidate.