

# VOTE FOR CARE



Guide to federal platforms by Canada's nurses | September 2021

 **Liberal**

 **CONSERVATIVE**

 **NDP**

 **green**  
PARTY OF CANADA

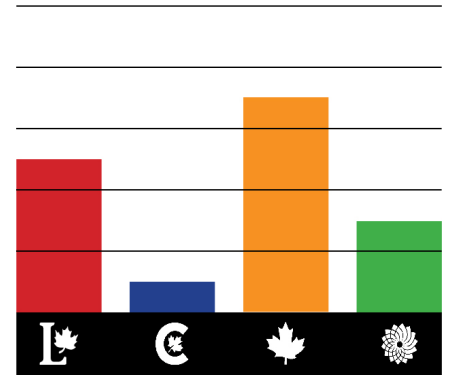
<b>Supporting nurses</b>	2.5 / 5	0.5 / 5	3.5 / 5	1.5 / 5
<b>Seniors' care</b>	4.5 / 5	1 / 5	4 / 5	3.5 / 5
<b>Pharmacare</b>	2.5 / 5	0 / 5	4.5 / 5	4.5 / 5
<b>Federal health care funding</b>	3.5 / 5	3 / 5	4 / 5	3 / 5
<b>Child care</b>	5 / 5	1 / 5	4.5 / 5	4 / 5

This assessment is based on responses received from the four major parties to a questionnaire on the CFNU's priority issues, as well as public information about the party's platforms released to-date. While the PBO and the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Democracy have conducted independent assessments of some of the parties' commitments, CFNU's analysis does not incorporate these independent assessments.

We're already in the next  
**HEALTH CARE  
CRISIS.**

  
CANADIAN  
FEDERATION  
OF NURSES  
UNIONS

# SUPPORTING NURSES



## WHERE CANADA'S NURSES STAND

In the face of crushing workloads, mandated overtime resulting in up to 24-hour shifts, the routine cancellation of vacations, and pervasive workplace violence, Canada's nurses have reached a breaking point. As a growing number leave their jobs or the profession, Canada must take a range of steps to sustain the workforce, such as: targeted federal funding to fill nursing shortages, a health workforce agency to address data and resource gaps in health workforce planning, and adequate protections from airborne viruses and workplace violence.

### LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

2.5/5

**Commitments:** a) provide \$3.2 billion to the provinces and territories for the hiring of 7,500 new family doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners toward primary health teams; b) expand the number of family doctors and primary health teams in rural communities by increasing the maximum debt relief that many health care workers are eligible for under the student loans forgiveness program.

**Analysis:** Targeted funding to hire nurses and nurse practitioners as part of primary health teams is positive, but we note that doctors are also included in the same envelope. It's difficult to say how many nurses and nurse practitioners this would amount to. We also note that the nursing shortage goes beyond primary care. The Liberal Party's platform fails to devote the necessary resources to retain and recruit nurses and offer leadership on health workforce planning through the creation of a dedicated agency.

### NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

3.5/5

**Commitments:** a) establish a \$250-million fund to train and hire more nurses across the country; b) identify coming gaps in health human resources and make a plan to recruit and retain the doctors, nurses and other health professionals Canadians need; c) work with the provinces to develop and support workforce strategies and violence prevention to recruit and protect frontline staff, and ensure a safe working environment for personal support workers and health care workers; d) ensure Canada maintains an adequate and responsibly managed stockpile of PPE, with an emphasis on supporting domestic production.

**Analysis:** We support commitments to train and hire more nurses and recognition of the need for federal leadership in health workforce planning. However, more generous funding to hire nurses and further details on plans to retain nurses and other health workers are needed. Mention of violence and domestic PPE production are positives.

### CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

0.5/5

**Commitments:** a) reinstate the tariff on imported PPE to recognize and secure the longevity of Canadian manufacturers; b) overhaul Canada's National Emergency Stockpile System to ensure supplies are there to rapidly respond to infectious disease, bioterrorism and similar threats, including ensuring the security of supply for personal protective equipment, diagnostic reagents and swab supplies, and adopting modern tracking systems to ensure supplies are used before they expire and available when needed.

**Analysis:** The Conservative Party's commitments to date make no mention whatsoever of Canada's nurses. While we agree with the need for domestic manufacturing and security of supply of PPE in order to protect nurses and all health workers through airborne precautions, the Conservative Party's failure to even acknowledge the existence of a critical nursing shortage and the need for federal supports shows a total lack of leadership on this issue.

### GREEN PARTY OF CANADA

1.5/5

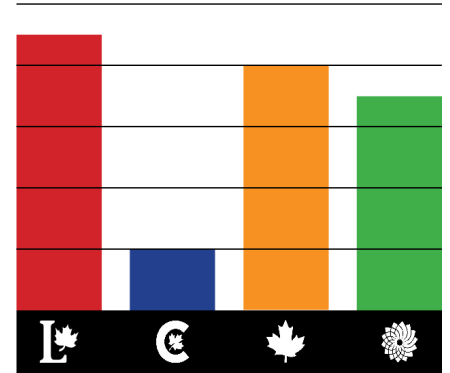
**Commitments:** a) boost domestic pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity; b) increase domestic production of PPE; c) new funding to integrate public health with community-based primary care; d) invest in and restructure health care and LTC systems to prepare for future pandemics; e) provide long-term funding for the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC); f) establish a Guaranteed Livable Income.

**Analysis:** A guaranteed basic income would provide critical support for people across the country, and new investments in PHAC, pandemic preparedness, and domestic drug and PPE manufacturing are much needed. However, the Green Party doesn't address key challenges faced by nurses, including short-staffing and workplace violence. Canada needs a national moratorium now on reducing nursing hours, as well as targeted funding to hire and retain nurses. In the longer term, federal leadership is necessary to provide enhanced data to guide hiring and worker safety standards.

# SENIORS' CARE

## WHERE CANADA'S NURSES STAND

COVID-19 exposed Canada's failure to care for our seniors. The CFNU has long called for the government to reverse the race to the bottom that led to tragedy in long-term care facilities. Years of under-investment and privatization encouraged an approach that focused on the search for profit, not on providing optimal conditions for work and care. Along with national standards, safe staffing and appropriate infection prevention and control measures, Canada must phase out for-profit care to provide safe, quality care for our seniors.



### LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

4.5/5

**Commitments:** a) \$9 billion in new funding to address shortfalls in the long-term care (LTC) sector, including \$3 billion to increase availability of long-term care beds; b) a new Safe Long-Term Care Act to set national standards for work, care and infection prevention and control, in cooperation with provinces and territories; c) a \$500-million investment to train as many as 50,000 new personal support workers and a minimum wage of at least \$25 an hour; d) increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement by \$500 for singles and \$750 for couples; e) restoring the retirement age to 65.

**Analysis:** New funding for critical improvements in LTC is necessary and welcome, as well as the Liberal Party's engagement to provide additional supports for care workers and low-income seniors. However, there is no commitment to phasing out for-profit care in the long-term care sector, which is essential to achieving meaningful and lasting change for workers and seniors.

### CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

1/5

**Commitments:** a) encourage provinces to develop best practices for LTC homes similar to the National Building Code and to incorporate these into law; b) a new Canada Seniors Care Benefit of \$200 per month per household for those living with and taking care of a parent over 70; c) allowing seniors or caregivers to claim the Medical Expense Tax Credit for home care; d) increasing the Home Accessibility Tax Credit limit from \$10,000 per dwelling to \$10,000 per person; e) amending the *Criminal Code* to establish the legal duty of operators of licensed care facilities toward residents of those facilities.

**Analysis:** While it includes a modest new form of income support for individuals and family caregivers, the Conservative Party's platform largely fails to respond to critical challenges in seniors' care. Under a CPC government, national LTC standards would be non-binding and unenforceable, and for-profit care would continue unchecked.

### NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

4/5

**Commitments:** a) ending private, for-profit care by bringing LTC homes into the public health care system, including Revera; b) working collaboratively to develop national standards for LTC and home care according to the principles of the *Canada Health Act*, with funding tied to standards; c) working with provinces to develop violence prevention and workforce strategies to recruit and protect staff; d) providing better wages, stable jobs and health and safety protections for LTC workers.

**Analysis:** The NDP commits to the elimination of for-profit LTC homes, which would have a significant positive impact on standards of care and work. The New Democratic Party platform comprehensively tackles the most serious and pressing issues in LTC and recognizes the value of care work, committing to better pay and job stability, as well as strategies to tackle critical workforce challenges, recruitment and violence against health care workers.

### GREEN PARTY OF CANADA

3.5/5

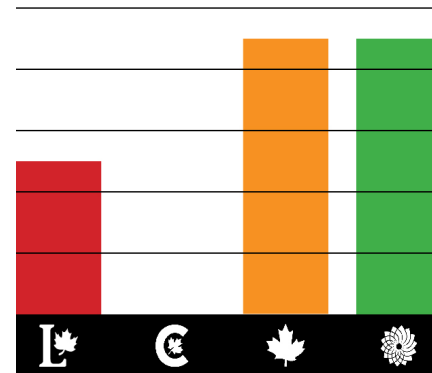
**Commitments:** a) bring LTC under the *Canada Health Act*; b) provide robust funding for seniors' care, including infrastructure and staffing, along with enforceable national standards for LTC; c) set a national standard of four hours of regulated care per day per LTC resident; d) improve training, pay and benefits, and sick leave for workers; e) invest in home and community-based care; f) fully fund the National Dementia Strategy; g) invest in elder abuse and violence prevention strategies; h) protect pensions by amending federal legislation.

**Analysis:** The Green Party proposes a strong and comprehensive set of measures to bring transformative change to seniors' care in Canada. Their commitments tackle a wide range of challenges, including work and care standards in LTC, elder abuse, and lack of access to new home and community-based care services. The GPC would also strengthen the Canada Pension Plan and address gaps in federal legislation to protect pensions.

# PHARMACARE

## WHERE CANADA'S NURSES STAND

Having a national, universal, public and single-payer pharmacare program would not only remove a heavy health and financial burden for millions of people in Canada, it would free up billions of dollars each year through the negotiating power of one national buyer. With an increased urgency behind universal access to prescriptions, Canada's nurses call for an accelerated implementation of the federal government-appointed advisory council report's recommendations, beginning with essential medicines coverage in 2022 and establishing a full formulary by 2025.



### LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

2.5/5

**Commitments:** a) will move forward on national universal pharmacare based on previous commitments, including: providing \$35 million over four years to the PEI government to add new drugs to its list of covered drugs, and lower out-of-pocket costs for drugs covered under existing public plans; establishing the pan-Canadian Advisory Panel on a Framework for a Prescription Drug List, which is mandated to create a recommended and non-binding framework, by the end of April 2022 for developing a potential pan-Canadian formulary; and funding a \$500 million a year national strategy for high-cost drugs for rare diseases.

**Analysis:** The Liberal Party had an opportunity to provide clarity around its implementation plans for pharmacare in its platform but chose to barely mention the issue. Without funding amounts and timelines, which are spelled out clearly in its own advisory council's report, commitments to date convey a stunted rather than an accelerated implementation.

### NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

4.5/5

**Commitments:** a) introduce prescription drug coverage for everyone, regardless of one's job, place of residence, age, health status or income; b) begin working with the provinces right away to target a 2022 start date, with an annual federal investment of \$10 billion; c) develop a national strategy to cover drugs for rare diseases; d) end costly copayments, deductibles and premiums.

**Analysis:** The NDP is clear in its bold commitment to an accelerated implementation of a national, universal, public and single-payer pharmacare program. While providing universal access to a full national formulary in 2022 may be overly ambitious, the NDP's unequivocal support for the urgent implementation of such a program is commendable. It is worth noting that the federal advisory council's report pegs the annual amount of federal funding for pharmacare at \$15 billion upon its full implementation, with annual savings of roughly \$5 billion.

### CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

0/5

**Commitments:** There are no commitments on pharmacare.

### GREEN PARTY OF CANADA

4.5/5

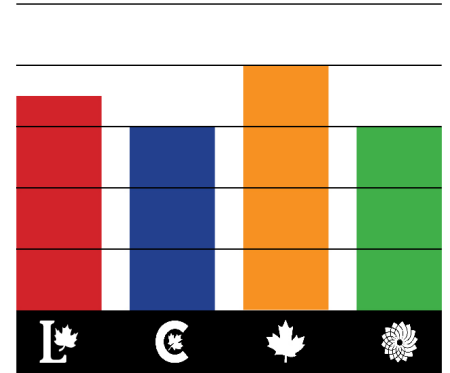
**Commitments:** a) expand the *Canada Health Act* to fully fund a universal pharmacare program; b) establish a bulk drug purchasing agency and reduce drug patent protection periods; c) establish a clear timeline for the implementation of universal pharmacare, beginning in 2022 with a list of essential medicines, a new Canadian Drug Agency and federal legislation developed with the provinces and territories, followed by a comprehensive national formulary by 2025, two years ahead of the 2027 timeline set out by the federal government's Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare in 2019.

**Analysis:** The CFNU gladly receives the Green Party's bold pledge to bring pharmacare to everyone in Canada by accelerating the Advisory Council's recommended timeline. The CFNU and allied health organizations and stakeholders have called on the federal government to act rapidly on its commitment to implement a national pharmacare program across Canada.

# FEDERAL HEALTH CARE FUNDING

## WHERE CANADA'S NURSES STAND

As the Parliamentary Budget Officer recently pointed out, Canada Health Transfer (CHT) payments can't keep up with rising health care spending. Over the past year, premiers have called for the federal government to increase its share of health care funding to 35% of the total cost and to maintain spending at that level. The CFNU supports this call and urges the government to target this funding toward the public delivery of patient care.



### LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

3.5/5

**Commitments:** a) \$6 billion in new funding to eliminate health care waitlists; b) a \$3 billion investment over four years to hire 7,500 family doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners; c) a commitment to expand virtual health care services; d) new loan forgiveness measures for dentists, pharmacists, social workers, mental health practitioners and others who choose to work in rural and remote communities, along with a new tax incentive to make it easier to set up a health practice in these communities.

**Analysis:** We welcome the Liberal Party's new commitments to end waitlists and recruit health care workers, as well as address the shortage of health care professionals in rural and remote communities. Though Canada Health Transfer negotiations were begun with the provinces before Election 2021, the LPC platform contains no mention of boosting the federal share of the CHT from the current 28% to 35% as requested by premiers.

### NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

4/5

**Commitments:** a) a pledge to work with the provinces and territories to strengthen health care and reverse the trend of decreasing federal funding in Medicare; b) a total of \$68 billion in new investments over five years to address health care funding deficits in drug, mental health and dental coverage, as well as home care and long-term care services, and a new Critical Worker Fund to tackle shortages of medical professionals. Funding is also included for a vaccination plan and assistance in fighting the opioid epidemic.

**Analysis:** With a pledge of close to \$70 billion over the next five years, the New Democrats' commitment to provide stable and reliable funding for health care services is to be greatly commended, along with their efforts to provide critical access to services for low-income people across the country.

### CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

3/5

**Commitments:** meet with the Premiers within the first 100 days of forming government to propose a new health agreement with the provinces and territories that boosts the annual growth rate of the Canada Health Transfer to at least 6%.

**Analysis:** In recognition of longstanding deficits in health care funding, the Conservative Party commits to growing the CHT by at least 6% annually, an important new investment.

### GREEN PARTY OF CANADA

3/5

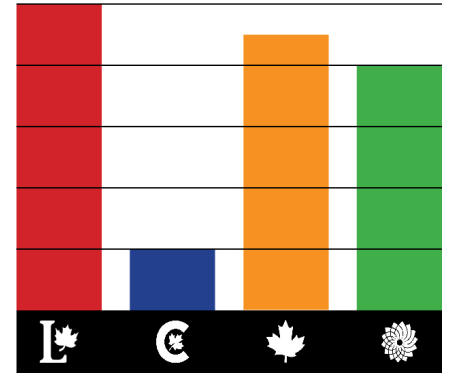
**Commitments:** a) restore the Canada Health Accord and replace the current formula to increase transfers by basing them on demographics and real health care needs in each province and territory; b) in negotiating the Canada Health Accord, prioritize mental health and rehabilitation services, as well as access to safe abortion services and gender-affirming health services; c) support family doctors and interprofessional teams to reduce wait times and enhance the accessibility of the care.

**Analysis:** The Green Party doesn't specifically commit to increasing the federal share of the Canada Health Transfer to 35%, proposing instead to use data relating to demographics and demand for services to determine health care funding. This will ensure that funding is more closely linked to population needs. We commend the Green Party on its commitment to provide support for services that can be difficult to access in many parts of the country.

# CHILD CARE

## WHERE CANADA'S NURSES STAND

In a pandemic that has decimated women's labour market participation, the need for a national, universal early-learning and child care system has never been more essential for all workers. Canada's nurses support its development, ensuring that parents pay no more than \$10/day by 2026; guaranteeing any further provision of services be public and non-profit only; and providing educators with competitive wages and benefits with incentives for further education. Equitable funding must be provided for Indigenous-led programs within the system.



### LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

5/5

**Commitments:** a) build a high-quality, affordable and flexible early-learning and child care system across Canada, that is \$10/day on average by 2026 outside of Quebec; b) focus on increasing the availability of quality spaces primarily in the not-for-profit sector; c) ensuring educators benefit from greater opportunities for professional development; d) support and funding toward early learning and child care for Indigenous children, guided by Indigenous priorities.

**Analysis:** The Liberal government made significant commitments to child care before the election and began delivering on these commitments by signing bilateral 5-year agreements with eight provinces and territories. The Liberal Party has a detailed plan that includes supports for educators, accessible fees for parents in primarily non-profit spaces, and provides earmarked funds for Indigenous-led programs and accessibility for children with disabilities. These commitments are to be applauded.

### NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

4.5/5

**Commitments:** a) work with other levels of government, Indigenous communities, families and child care workers to ensure that care is inclusive and responsive to the needs of all children; b) introduce legislation that enshrines a commitment to high-quality public child care in law; c) take immediate action to save not-for-profit centres at risk of closure to re-open spaces lost during COVID-19; d) immediately work with the provinces to build a \$10/day system that is universal and ensures workers are paid a fair living wage.

**Analysis:** The NDP's commitment to establish a public and universal child care system and its direct reference to workers' pay are commendable. The introduction of legislation is laudable, as it cements into law the ongoing commitments and conditions upon which a national program would remain in place.

### CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

1/5

**Commitments:** a) convert the Child Care Expense deduction into a refundable tax credit covering up to 75% of the cost of child care for lower-income families to increase the support that lower-income families receive by thousands of dollars per year and provide more assistance to almost all families.

**Analysis:** The Conservative Party's plan fails to account for the serious shortage of high-quality child care spaces across the country. It is unclear how the Conservatives' plan would rapidly attract enough workers at fair wages to match growing demand. While the party's platform states that they "will enable more women to choose to participate in the workforce," without a universal, publicly funded system that guarantees high-quality and accessible spaces, it limits how many women can make this choice. A tax credit is no substitute for investing in a national and universal early-learning and child care system.

### GREEN PARTY OF CANADA

4/5

**Commitments:** a) work collaboratively with stakeholders to create a policy roadmap toward an affordable universal early-learning and child care system (ELCC); b) improve and strengthen parental leave; c) increase federal child care funding to at least 1% of GDP annually; d) train, recruit and retain well-paid and professional staff; e) ensure equitable access to high-quality, culturally appropriate ELCC programs for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children.

**Analysis:** The Green Party's commitment to work with partners to establish a set of guiding principles is important to ensure sustainable, first-rate child care in the future. The CFNU also welcomes critically needed new funding to ensure that First Nations, Inuit and Métis children are able to access high-quality child care programs. Also notable is the Green Party's commitment to provide targeted funding for the training, recruitment and retention of ELCC workers.