

Coalition Meeting NDP MP Jack Harris
September 11, 2020

Welcome/advise audience

Topics for discussion:

➤ **Long Term Care Crisis**

- As of the end of June, COVID-19 had killed 8,453 Canadians and close to 82% of them (6,932) were residents of long-term care;
- That's the highest death rate in the world, it's a national disgrace;
- We have known about the many short-comings in our LTC's for years now. And its great that politicians are finally embarrassed enough to vow to correct them. But even if corrections are made to all the items on the fix it list by giving/building more facilities, we'll still require hundreds of new homes and thousands of new beds to deal with the growth of the aging population that lies ahead'
- Its time to look again at and stand and advocate for a simple solution: HOME CARE. Home Care is a solution to Long Term Care.
- Help people to age in place, its preferred. It's cheaper than institutionalization;
- In Canada, 90% of LTC dollars go to nursing homes, with only 10% for home care;
- There are many success examples world-wide. We do not have to re-invent the wheel. We simply have to have the will, determination, and oversight to declare that HOME CARE will be the direction and direct the proper resources in that direction.
- **The status quo is unacceptable. Long-term care in Canada needs to be re-built from the ground up, with home and community care as the foundation.**

- Residential care facilities (what most people think of when talking about long-term care) have long been plagued by underlying systemic vulnerabilities—severe underfunding, chronic understaffing, out-dated facilities with multi-room wards—these challenges existed before COVID-19, and will continue to threaten the lives of vulnerable residents without immediate action.

➤ What are some of the fixes?

- **Minimum staffing levels that include more interdisciplinary, full time staff to improve continuity of care**
- **Training and education to support ongoing professional development and specialization for care workers, managers and boards**
- **Innovative solutions that will provide increased space for quarantines, access to rapid testing, and personal protective equipment**
- **Funding for long-term care home renewal projects, including HVAC, floor and window replacements, water and sewer line replacement, and building upgrades (additional bathrooms, reconfiguring 4-bedroom wards)**
- **Funding for transformative and compassionate dementia care model in long-term care facilities**
- **Fully funded high-dose flu vaccines and expansion of pneumococcal coverage for Canadians over 65 in congregate settings**

➤ These measures would go a long way in preventing further catastrophic loss of life in residential care facilities. But fixing long-term care in our country will take more than short-term solutions.

➤ To keep our vulnerable seniors safe, there's no place like home.

➤ The Coalition is urging governments to recognize that home care and community-based care solutions are critical to resolving the long-term care crisis.

➤ We can better support Canadians living in their homes for longer, by:

- Increasing support for front line home care, respite care, and day programs to enable aging in place
- Increasing funding and use of technology-enabled home care solutions to better support individuals living safely and autonomously
- Expanding tele-health care solutions to support patients and families, and maintain options for physicians to continue with remote consults via phone or video conference

- Ensuring all caregivers have access to financial relief through the federal Family Caregiver Tax Credit by making it refundable or a rebate
- **National Seniors Strategy:** Given the crisis that was unveiled with long term care during COVID-19, the need for a National Seniors Strategy is more important than ever. The Coalition continues to be disappointed that there is no commitment to such a Strategy. As a part of the response to the LTC crisis, there is also a need to look at the terms of the Health Accord to better focus the dollars and the way health care is administered in the country.
- **National Universal Pharmacare:** In February 2020, Mr. Harris advised that achieving a National Universal Pharmacare Program that has the same model as Medicare is the #1 priority for the NDP. We had discussion about the definition of “universal” and what might be included and how the government might garner support for implementation, given the minority status. We also discussed the competing provincial interests and the strong opposition being lobbied by pharmaceutical companies. We did stress that it is important that this not be delayed, that there is no need for more research and from the position of the Coalition, we were stressing “universal” as inclusive of all, anywhere in Canada, same model as Medicare. **What is the current status? Will you undertake to raise this with your Party to make it a priority once again, as it seems to have slipped from importance during the pandemic?**