

**Background: Green Plan for valuing healthcare workers and promoting the health and wellness of Islanders**

**1. Immediately invest \$37 million directly into wage increases and benefits for frontline healthcare staff at Health PEI. This includes all levels of nursing, medical lab technologists, radiation technologists, porters, cleaning staff, and all others who work on the frontline of patient care.**

This will result in approximately a 15% wage increase with some left for benefits. Benefits could include increased monetary benefits or support in the workplace such as technology upgrades, security systems, professional development opportunities, etc.

The full plan also includes separate commitments to

- Raise paramedic wages to at least the level of other Maritime provinces; and
- Regularly review wages of health professionals, including physicians, and make sure they are competitive with other provinces.

**2. Make sure that healthcare workers can take their vacation.**

We would explore various ways to do this, including:

- Look for managers that can go back to the frontline to cover shifts. There are many healthcare professionals who move into administrative roles. These positions could be created with a requirement to continue working a minimum number of hours of clinical practice. This would likely be negotiated during hiring.
- Cut back on the administrative work of health professionals so they can focus on patient care.
- Immediately fund one additional support staff for family physicians and nurse practitioners who request additional support. This may be in the form of a nurse, counsellor, medical administrator, admin support, etc., based on the needs of the practice. (This commitment was previously announced under “Getting healthcare out of crisis”.)

**3. Support existing healthcare workers to increase their skills and certifications:**

**Create a LPN to RN bridging program.**

**Cover expenses for English language tests.**

The LPN to RN bridging program will help licensed practical nurses already in the health system upgrade their skills to those of a registered nurse. The program will be designed in consultation with key stakeholders such as healthcare unions, Health PEI, and post-secondary institutions.

Currently any RN or LPN who does not identify English as their first language must complete an English language competency test to be registered on PEI. The cost of this test is \$280 and is only administered in New Brunswick or Nova Scotia. Any student graduating from an RN or LPN

program on PEI who requires this testing will have the test and associated travel costs covered by the province.

**4. Increase funding for the Chief Public Health Office to deliver more public health initiatives. For example:**

Expand vaccine clinics in schools and improve health education in the K-12 curriculum. Enhance immunization programs to prevent vaccine-preventable disease and reduce vaccine hesitancy.

Promote improved ventilation on Prince Edward Island.

Pursue initiatives to reduce substance abuse in PEI.

Review our COVID-19 pandemic response and update our pandemic plan to ensure we are prepared for future pandemics.

The CPHO's total annual budget pre-COVID was approximately \$5 million, with about \$1 million devoted to health promotion. We plan to increase the CPHO's budget by \$3 million to allow it to expand its health promotion and related activities. This work would be guided by a new strategic plan for the CPHO to reflect this expanded mandate.

**5. Provide free or low-cost access to fitness activities and artistic, cultural, and social activities for Islanders.**

Cost can be a barrier for many Islanders to participate in physical activity. Reducing or eliminating the cost to participate in physical activities.

Participation in artistic, cultural, and social activities has also been shown to be very beneficial for a person's mental and physical health. Helping Islanders more easily meet their social and emotional needs by removing cost barriers will improve health outcomes.

Arts, culture, and social activities are also a critical part of the province's tourism sector, so giving them a boost will help strengthen the tourism industry and make it more sustainable.

These programs could be implemented in various ways, including through financial support for community organizations, tax rebates for individuals and families, or direct payments. The exact model would be determined in consultation with health experts and other stakeholders. We are committing to an initial annual budget of \$1 million for this purpose.

**6. Expand active transportation and trail infrastructure, especially within municipalities.**

Having more active transportation infrastructure near where people live can make it safer and easier for people to stay active and healthy. It also helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The province's Active Transportation Fund is currently at \$5 million annually. We plan to increase this to \$8.5 million, as well as better integrate active transportation into existing infrastructure programs.

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