

Background: Green plan for respecting Seniors

1. Reduce drug costs for seniors by investing \$18 million into provincial pharmacare programs and eliminating unnecessary fees.

The Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) estimates that PEI had the lowest per capita provincial government drug expenditure of any Atlantic Province in 2020.

In 2022, it was estimated that 16.9% of Canadian prescribed drug expenditures are out-of-pocket expenses. On a per capita basis, that is \$196.06.¹ Assuming all else is equal², the estimated total cost of out-of-pocket drug expenses on PEI would equate to \$33,860,334.³

A Green government would make an immediate investment of \$18 million into provincial pharmacare programs to improve access and eliminate unnecessary fees. This would help close the gap between the Prince Edward Island and Canadian average per capita expenditures on pharmacare. Included in this commitment is free access to contraceptive care.

2. Immediately make repairs to government-owned seniors housing and ensure that maintenance is always up to date.

Island seniors have been forced to live in deplorable living conditions. This was especially highlighted in the aftermath of Fiona and the February cold snap. To ensure Island seniors can enjoy the living conditions they deserve, a Green government would:

- increase funding for public housing repairs and renovations;
- improve security and access to in-person maintenance support in public housing;
- improve access to food programs and technology; and
- review eligibility thresholds for seniors public housing.

3. Review fees in long-term care and community care homes to make sure they are fair to seniors and their families.

Islanders have expressed concerns about the rising cost of community care and long-term care, and how much families of seniors in care are expected to pay. There are also concerns about the amount of a senior's income and assets are required to be given up when they enter care. A Green government would immediately review these fees and regulations to make sure Islanders are not paying more than is necessary.

¹ CIHI nhex-series-G-2022

² It should be noted that private-sector prescription drug expenditures, which includes out-of-pocket expenditures and private insurers, is 54.3% of drug expenditures in PEI, vs 48.6% in Canada. Provincial data is not comprehensive enough to break down private-sector prescription drug expenditures.

³ Assuming population of 172,707 * \$196.06.

4. Make the Seniors' Food Program pilot permanent and expand it to include all of Prince Edward Island.

The Seniors Food Program delivers reheatable meals, but this program is limited to the Georgetown and Cardigan areas. A Green government would expand this program to include all of Prince Edward Island.

5. Establish an independent seniors' advocate to ensure the interests of Island seniors are protected.

Seniors are particularly vulnerable sectors of the population that are often dependent on a wide variety of government services. However, they also often face unique barriers advocating for themselves in relation to government decisions, policies, and programs. This demographic has been increasing as our population ages, and consequently the services that these people rely on are increasingly stressed, potentially amplifying the barriers they face.

A Green Government would establish an independent seniors' advocate, an officer of the Legislative Assembly to support and advocate on behalf of seniors and persons with disabilities with respect to their rights and interests in relation to government policies and services. It is based in part on the model of the recently created Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, and the Child and Youth Advocate Act.