Canadian Dental Association
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Alberta Dental Association and College

British Columbia Dental Association

Manitoba Dental Association

New Brunswick Dental Society

Newfoundland & Labrador Dental Association

Northwest Territories & Nunavut Dental Association / Yukon Dental Association

Nova Scotia Dental Association

Ontario Dental Association

Dental Association of Prince Edward Island

The College of Dental Surgeons of Saskatchewan

August 27, 2021

Hon. Erin O'Toole, P.C., C.D.
Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada
1720 – 130 Albert Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4

Re: Conservative Party of Canada Election Platform

Dear Mr. O'Toole,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Canadian Dental Association (CDA), Canada's national voice for dentistry. As a federation of Canada's provincial and territorial dental associations (PDAs), CDA represents over 21,000 practising dentists from coast to coast to coast and is dedicated to the promotion of optimal oral health, an essential component of general health, and to the advancement and leadership of a unified profession.

COVID-19 has had a transformative impact on the health and well-being of Canadians. Despite the challenges to maintain a safe environment for patients and staff, dentists have continued to provide important emergency and routine care to their patients throughout the pandemic. While the pandemic has brought to light new challenges for the delivery of dental care, it has also underlined existing problems Canadians face in achieving and maintaining their oral health and in receiving dental treatment. The COVID-19 experience has also served as a reminder of the benefit of proactive health measures, such as promoting healthy eating and ensuring the overall health of seniors in long-term care (LTC) facilities.

CDA representatives had the opportunity earlier this month to meet with Holly Duggan and Alex MacDonald from your campaign team to provide input on the Conservative Party's electoral platform. We appreciate having had this opportunity to highlight priority issues, relating to the dental profession in Canada, and the oral health of Canadians.

This election, we hope that you will incorporate our recommendations into the Conservative Party's election platform or individual policy proposals. Notably, these include:

- Supporting a detailed Parliamentary study on improving dental coverage for Canadians, rather than immediately introducing a new, large-scale federal dental care program;
- Making an interim investment of $600 million over the next 5 years to maintain and expand existing dental care programs delivered at the provincial and territorial level, particularly those serving vulnerable populations; and
- Ensuring any new national standards developed for LTC facilities include a standard related to oral health.

CDA is also making recommendations related to supporting dentists and dental offices – many of which are small businesses – as Canada transitions to life post-COVID, and promoting healthy eating, particularly among children. While we understand that your party has already released its full election platform, it does not directly respond to any of CDA's recommendations, and we remain hopeful that you will address these through additional policy proposals released over the coming days and weeks.

We kindly request that, regardless of whether these recommendations are included in the Conservative Party's election platform or policy proposals released during the campaign, that you or a member of your campaign team replies to CDA indicating the official Conservative position on each recommendation. Should you, or members of your campaign team, wish to discuss these recommendations – or other issues relating to the dental profession and the oral health of Canadians – please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard Holden
President
Canadian Dental Association

c.c.

Tako van Popta, Platform Co-Chair, Conservative Party of Canada
John Nater, Platform Co-Chair, Conservative Party of Canada
Robert Batherson, President, Conservative Party of Canada
Fred DeLorey, Campaign Manager, Conservative Party of Canada