Liberal Party of Canada
350 Albert Street, Suite 920
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Parti libéral du Canada
350, rue Albert, bureau 920
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September 12, 2021

Canadian Dental Association

Via email: mbreau@cda-adc.ca

Dear Mr. Breau,

Enclosed, please find the Liberal Party of Canada's formal response to your questionnaire.

On behalf of our Leader, Justin Trudeau, and the entire Liberal team, thank you for writing to identify the major concerns of your membership.

We appreciate your interest in the Liberal Party of Canada's policies as they relate to the issues which affect you.

Sincerely,

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Supporting a detailed Parliamentary study on improving dental coverage for Canadians, rather than immediately introducing a new, large-scale federal dental care program.

A re-elected Liberal government would continue to support a Parliamentary study and analysis of a national dental care program to examine the most appropriate federal role in this area in collaboration with provinces and territories.

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.

The Liberal Party of Canada recognizes the importance of oral and dental health, especially in vulnerable populations, and the link between oral health and overall health. In 2021-22, the federal government will provide over $43 billion in cash support to provinces and territories through the Canada Health Transfer. The health transfer is set to grow each year, in line with the growth rate of the economy, with a minimum increase of at least 3% per year. These health transfers can help support the provinces and territories to ensure that dental programs at their level of governance are properly supported, including for vulnerable communities. A Liberal government will continue to support provinces and territories to respond to the pandemic with the financial support required to protect the health and safety of Canadians.

Ensuring any new national standards developed for LTC facilities include a standard related to oral health.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a profound impact on the health and well-being of Canadians living in long-term care (LTC) and retirement homes and has impacted access to end-of-life care.
We have a strong record of working cooperatively with their provincial and territorial partners and have a new $9 billion plan that will deliver better care for Canadians in long-term care. In addition, in 2022, we are renegotiating homecare agreements with provinces and territories to improve access to homecare and transitions to long term care and palliative care.

The Liberal government has been at the table with the Standards Council of Canada (SCC), Health Standards Organization (HSO), Canadian Standards Association (CSA Group) and willing provinces and territories to collaborate on the development of two new complementary National Standards for Long-Term Care. The CSA and HSO are engaged in a broad consultation to ensure that the standards will be shaped by the needs of residents, families and Canada's LTC workforce. We recognize that oral health is an important part of overall health and quality of life and will consider this aspect of health in the consultations to best serve our seniors and others in LTC.

In addition to participating in the Standards Development process led by the experts at HSO and CSA, we will work with partners to introduce a Safe Long-term Care Act that ensures standards of care are upheld across the country.

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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.

The Liberal Party understands the challenges faced by many small businesses, and in particular those in the healthcare sector such as dentists. That's why we rapidly implemented supports such as the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy and the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) to provide small businesses up to $60,000 in partially forgivable, interest free loans. The Liberal government has also procured over 50 million rapid tests throughout the pandemic, which have been made available to small businesses through pharmacies and Chambers of Commerce, to help cut chains of transmission and keep businesses open.

In terms of promoting healthy eating, a re-elected Liberal government is committed to moving forward with front-of-pack labelling that will help Canadians make healthy food choices. We know that high intakes of saturated fat, sugars and sodium are linked to chronic conditions and diseases, such as obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes, which also put additional strain on our healthcare system. By implementing front-of-pack labelling, we will make it easier for Canadians to choose healthier options.

A re-elected Liberal government will also introduce new restrictions on the marketing of food and beverages to children. We know that this is only part of the solution to ensuring our children are in a healthier food environment, which is why we are also committed to a National School Food Policy and working towards a national school nutritious meals program with a $1 billion investment over five years. Together, these initiatives will help children in Canada grow up healthier.