

NDP Response: Canadian Dental Association

Michel Breau
Manager, Government and Community Relations
Canadian Dental Association

Dear Mr. Breau,

Thank you for taking the time to reach out with the Canadian Dental Association's policy recommendations.

We wish to extend our sincere gratitude to Canada's dentists for the sacrifices they've made to continue caring for their patients throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Our plans to address the priorities you've identified are outlined below.

Improving Dental Coverage for Canadians

Everyone deserves the dignity of a healthy smile. And yet, every year over 6 million Canadians avoid going to the dentist because they can't afford it. One-in-three Canadians has no dental coverage at all. New Democrats cannot accept this glaring gap in our public health care system. We believe that access to dental care should be a right in the country, not a privilege.

A New Democratic government will work in partnership with the provinces and territories, along with Canada's dentists and other oral health professionals to develop a roadmap to incorporate universal dental care into Canada's public health care system. We believe that dentists make an essential contribution to health care delivery in Canada. That's why we're going to ensure that all Canadians have access their services.

We will start by extending comprehensive dental coverage to 6.5 million uninsured Canadians. Our plan will be administered by the federal government, or by provinces and territories upon agreement. There will be no cost for people with household incomes below \$70,000. Co-payments will be required on a sliding scale for those with a household income between \$70,000 and \$90,000.

A detailed costing of our dental care plan from the Parliamentary Budget Officer is available here: www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/web/default/files/Documents/Reports/RP-2021-028-M/RP-2021-028-M_en.pdf.

Oral Health in Long-Term Care Facilities

New Democrats believe that the COVID-19 catastrophe in Canada's long-term care system must lead to transformative change. Within our first 100 days in office, we will bring the provinces, territories, workers and experts together to develop a national strategy on long-term and continuing care that will include national

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standards for care. We strongly agree that these standards should include oral health care.

Supporting dental offices and access to dental care as Canada transitions to life post-COVID

New Democrats agree that federal support for is necessary to ensure access to dental care for Canadians as we emerge from COVID-19. We'll ensure that emergency wage and rent subsidies continue for dental offices that operate as small businesses until the impacts of the pandemic subside. To help these small businesses get people back to work, we'll put in place a long-term hiring bonus to pay the employer portion of EI and CPP for new or rehired staff.

Promoting Healthy Eating

New Democrats will partner with provinces, territories, municipalities and Indigenous communities to work towards a national school nutrition program that will give every child in Canada access to healthy food, and the food literacy skills to make healthy choices for life. We'll aim to make culturally appropriate food available to children in every community in Canada, so that all children can grow and learn.

We support the implementation of effective front-of-package labelling requirements to help Canadians choose products that are lower in sodium, sugar, or saturated fats. These nutrition labels would provide quick and easy guidance to help people make informed choices about their eating habits. They would also encourage industry to improve the nutritional quality of packaged foods available in the marketplace.

Finally, a New Democratic government will ban junk food advertising targeted at children. Pediatricians and childhood development experts have been calling for this critical public health measure for years. Québec has had legislation in place since the early 1980s to protect children from advertising – it's time to establish similar safeguards across Canada.

Again, thank you for your message. For more information, please visit: www.ndp.ca.

Sincerely,

Canada's New Democrats