

# Questions to Federal Party Leaders

**Note: Responses will be posted as they are received.**

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## Question 1

Pharmacists receive 5 years of university education and training and are the most accessible health care professional. Would you support policies to enable pharmacists to play a greater role in health care?

### Liberal Party Response

*Response to questions 1 and 2*

The Liberal government's dedication to building a stronger public health care system is unquestionable. Shortly before the opposition party's forced this election on the country, we adopted the Canadian Public Health Care Protection Initiative as government policy. It will do three specific things. It will:

- ensure that any future health care funding investment — whether for doctors and nurses, medical equipment, or a national pharmaceuticals strategy — will be solely for use within the public health care system;
- eliminate double-dipping by doctors, the practice of which can serve as an incentive to offering private alternatives; and,
- establish a proper information base to track the patterns and activities within our health care system so that future actions will be based on solid facts.

Taken together with last year's Health Accord — our 10-year, \$41-billion plan to strengthen public health care and cut wait times — the Liberal government is working with the provinces and territories to protect and enhance public health care

While this work continues, this government realizes that there are many important matters — such as regulations governing pharmacists and pharmacy services — fall under provincial jurisdiction. A Liberal government is bound to respect those jurisdictions.

### Conservative Party Response

The Conservative Party of Canada recognizes the valuable role pharmacists play in our health care system. Often, you are the first line of defense in health care for many Canadians and the education and services you provide enhance our system. However, under the Canadian constitution, the regulation and practice of pharmacy falls under the jurisdiction of the provinces. Therefore, any decisions affecting the

expansion of the role played by pharmacists in our health care system would rest with the provincial governments. A Conservative government would support the decision of any provincial government that chooses to expand the role of pharmacists in our health care system.

### New Democratic Party Response

The NDP will consult with partners and groups like yours to study such a proposal.

### Bloc Quebecois Party Response

*No response yet.*

## Question 2

How would you improve Canadians access to prescription medications?

### Liberal Party Response

*Response to questions 1 and 2*

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## Conservative Party Response

A Conservative government would improve access in two ways. First, a Conservative government would support reasonable access to catastrophic drug coverage for all Canadians. Second, we would explore ways by which drug approval could be sped up without compromising patient safety.

## New Democratic Party Response

Jack Layton and the NDP believe this issue must be a priority in the next Parliament. We will introduce a National Prescription Drug Plan.

- Building on the offer of the provinces and territories towards the establishment of a national prescription drug plan, which would be phased in beginning with coverage for key catastrophic drug costs and gradually expanding coverage, as finances permit, until the plan is universal in application.
- Beginning by phasing out the evergreening of patent drugs so cheaper generic drugs can come to market sooner. And the ban on direct-to-consumer advertising of pharmaceuticals so there is less unnecessary prescribing of drug therapies.

Moving to a national plan would be good for individuals, businesses and our national economy.

- Employers would gain a significant competitive advantage over their U.S. counterparts.
- At their 2004 summit, the premiers estimated \$2 billion would be saved overall through a national pharmacare plan. The provinces and territories are now waiting for the kind of leadership from Ottawa this NDP commitment provides.

## Bloc Quebecois Party Response

*No response yet.*

## Question 3

**In the United States, pharmacists are allowed to give vaccines would you support pharmacists doing this in Canada?**

## Liberal Party Response

*Response to questions 3 and 5*

The Liberal government remains committed to working with the provincial and territorial governments to develop and implement the National Pharmaceutical Strategy (NPS). We believe that no Canadian should suffer undue financial hardship for needed drug therapies.

In 2005, all Health Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the NPS. The strategy is a multifaceted plan, encompassing a range of initiatives. It will expand affordable access for Canadians and ensure that public drug expenditures are focused on value for money. This will lead to more equitable access to safe and effective drug therapies for Canadians when they need them.

A Task Group of federal, provincial, and territorial government representatives has been established. Work is underway to meet the time frames set by First Ministers in 2004 and to report on progress on the NPS by June 30, 2006.

Participation of health care providers, patients, and industry stakeholders is vital to the success of the NPS. The Liberal government is developing a stakeholder engagement strategy to ensure optimal input to the NPS.

## Conservative Party Response

As mentioned above, any such move would have to be made on an individual basis by the provinces.

## New Democratic Party Response

The NDP is committed to work with all health partners like pharmacists, nurses, doctors and others to study such a proposal.

## Bloc Quebecois Party Response

*No response yet.*



## **Question 4**

**The standard of care we provide to our aboriginal peoples is poor, what would you do to improve it?**

### **Liberal Party Response**

The November 25, 2005 announcement of more than \$5 billion over five years to close the gaps between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians in education, health, housing and economic opportunities is a commitment made by a Liberal government and one we fully intend to live up to.

On September 13, 2004, Prime Minister Paul Martin, First Ministers, and National Aboriginal Leaders agreed to work together to develop a blueprint to improve the health status of all Aboriginal peoples. This included a \$700 million dollar federal investment to improve the health status and overall quality of life of Aboriginal Peoples including First Nations, Inuit and Métis regardless of where they live.

The Liberal government will be guided by the historic Aboriginal Health Blueprint as a national framework for investment and collaborative action. This includes the investment of \$1.315 billion over the next five years in Aboriginal health: \$870 million to stabilize the First Nation and Inuit Health System; and, \$445 million to promote transformation and to build capacity.

The Liberal party believes Aboriginal health is a national priority. Specifically, we have committed to doubling the number of Aboriginal health professionals in ten years — from 150 physicians and 1,200 nurses today — and to focus on core measures of health that we can monitor and improve upon in each community. We have also set goals with the co-operation of the Aboriginal leadership to reduce the gaps in key areas such as infant mortality, youth suicide, childhood obesity and diabetes — by 20 percent in five years, and 50 percent in ten.

### **Conservative Party Response**

A Conservative government would uphold the fundamental obligation of Government of Canada to provide health care services to aboriginal peoples. We will work with aboriginal communities and the provincial health ministries to ensure adequate levels of care are delivered in a timely and effective manner.

### **New Democratic Party Response**

In the next Parliament, Jack Layton and the NDP will work with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples on issues important to them and to Canada, including this high-priority matter. We will:

- Provide adequate housing, water, and infrastructure.
- Respect traditional healing, working together with western medicine to provide quality care.
- Respond to the unique health needs of northern and remote communities.
- Encourage traditional nutrition, fitness, and breast-feeding practices.
- Work with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples to develop comprehensive and holistic mental health and wellness strategies with special focus on healing, addictions and suicide prevention.

### **Bloc Quebecois Party Response**

*No response yet.*

## **Question 5**

**Drug policies need to be better aligned and coordinated to be effective, the Canadian Pharmacists Association have called for a National Medication Management Centre to get everyone working better together, governments, health care professionals and consumers. Would you support this idea?**

### **Liberal Party Response**

*Response to questions 3 and 5*

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Participation of health care providers, patients, and industry stakeholders is vital to the success of the NPS. The Liberal government is developing a stakeholder engagement strategy to ensure optimal input to the NPS.

## Conservative Party Response

In consultations with the provinces and territories, a Conservative government would be willing to give consideration to such an idea.

## New Democratic Party Response

The NDP is committed to a national pharmacare program to help Canadians afford the drugs they need, starting with Canadians with low incomes or those facing massive drug costs because of catastrophic illness.

## Bloc Quebecois Party Response

*No response yet.*

## Question 6

**All politics are local, and so is the delivery of health services. How much input has your party sought from pharmacists in developing your position on the health system?**

## Liberal Party Response

The Liberal Party of Canada has a policy process that begins with gathering new ideas from Liberal members in riding associations and Liberal clubs across the country. These ideas are then shaped into policy resolutions that get debated at provincial and national conferences.

The Liberal Party of Canada's policy process is open and reflects the grassroots nature of the Party. It is a policy process that ultimately serves the national interest by providing the government with a snapshot of what issues are currently important to citizens. All Canadians, including pharmacists, who are

interested in the policy process, can participate at the local riding level. This grassroots involvement by Canadians helps to keep the Liberal Party a strong and vibrant political organization.

## Conservative Party Response

*No response to question 6.*

## New Democratic Party Response

Our MPs constantly consult with groups from different fields and we are ready to listen to the issues and concerns of these groups and work in partnership to improve the well-being of Canadians.

## Bloc Quebecois Party Response

*No response yet.*

## Question 7

**Canadians are tired of the bickering between governments. If elected will you work towards a better collaboration between all levels of government? If yes, what tangible actions will you take?**

## Liberal Party Response

*No response to question 7*

## Conservative Party Response

As health care falls under the jurisdiction of the provinces in the constitution, it is incumbent on the federal government to maintain a solid working relationship with the provinces. Under a Conservative government, communication and consultation would replace empty threats and grandstanding on the part of Ottawa.

## New Democratic Party Response

The NDP is committed to work with all level of government to improve the lives of Canadians. This is why we are committed to work with all provinces and territories for:

- Better health care by working on the long-term care, home care, drug prescription and training health professionals.
- Better education by offering provinces and territories a binding commitment to stable, long-term funding in



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this area through a dedicated transfer, in return for an equally binding commitment to better access and lower tuition fees — standards that will be monitored and enforced. In addition, New Democrats will work with provinces and territories to protect education and research from privatization.

We are also strongly committed to work with municipalities on infrastructure and affordable housing.

## Bloc Quebecois Party Response

*No response yet.*

### Question 8

Are you prepared to draft legislation to make home care services part of medicare?

## Liberal Party Response

The Liberal government recognizes the value of home care as a cost-effective means of delivering healthcare services. All jurisdictions, including the federal government, are working towards meeting the December 2006 target for implementation of home care services identified in the Ten-Year Plan. Under discussion are the following:

- short-term acute home care for two-week provision of case management, intravenous medications related to discharge diagnosis, nursing and personal care;
- short-term acute community mental health home care for two-week provision of case management, and crisis response services; and, end-of-life care for case management, nursing, personal care, and palliative-specific pharmaceuticals.

## Conservative Party Response

The Conservative party supports the home care measures contained in the 2004 federal-provincial Health Accord. We would ensure that the federal government and the provinces follow through on the commitments they made at the 2004 conference, and ensure that the agreed-upon deadline of December 31, 2006 be met.

## New Democratic Party Response

Jack Layton and the NDP will help provide the home care Canadians need.

We'll expand the coverage of home care including post-acute coverage, home mental health services and interventions, and palliative care for those in the last six months of their life. We will work with the provinces and territories to implement the Home Care Transfer called for in the Romanow Report.

The Romanow Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada found that Canadians want a priority placed on home care. They know this will reduce the use of much more expensive hospital space, increase the care options for the terminally ill and keep people healthier, longer. Home care is medically effective, financially efficient and personally satisfying.

The NDP will also help seniors remain independent in their homes longer with improved home care. We believe that a full range of supports must be available for seniors, from home care and home support through assisted living, to complex care and palliative care.

## Bloc Quebecois Party Response

*No response yet.*

