1. When polled, health is consistently at the top of the list of issues that matter to Canadians. Our healthcare system is changing rapidly and facing new challenges and opportunities. **What commitments will your party make to improve health outcomes for Canadians and address the current challenges of the healthcare system?**

Our public health care system is an expression of the values that bind us. Green MPs will defend and expand universal health care to address the new challenges that face our system. Greens want to bring all parties back to the table for a renewal of the Health Accord and truly innovate in health care through the use of electronic health records, patient-centred team medicine built around the family physician working with nurse-practitioners, pharmacists, midwives, naturopaths and others.

We have bold new initiatives to improve health care delivery to all Canadians. It is appalling that in a country as wealthy as Canada, our children do not have guaranteed no-cost access to high quality dental care. In order to address the crisis among the most marginal in our society, we will expand our public health care coverage to include dental coverage for low-income Canadians under the age of eighteen. Our medical system focuses disproportionately on cure and not enough on prevention. We will work with the provinces to develop preventative health care guidelines that incentivize active lifestyles and healthy diets, saving our system millions by keeping Canadians healthy from childhood onwards.

And we will complete our universal health care program by guaranteeing that all Canadians have access to the medication they need through expanding public health care to cover prescription medication.

2. While we don’t yet have full understanding of the extent of the issue, recent studies have suggested that as many as 1 in 4 Canadians cannot afford to fill their prescriptions because of high costs and gaps in public and private coverage. We do however know that coverage varies significantly across the country. **What would your party do to address these gaps and ensure that all Canadians have access to pharmacist services and appropriate drug therapies no matter where they live or their income?**

Every developed country in the world with a universal health care system provides prescription drug coverage, except Canada. Truly universal health care means guaranteeing that all Canadians have access to the medication they need, and the Green Party will fight to expand public health care to cover prescription medication. The Green Party also advocates for an
enlarged role for pharmacists to allow them to prescribe certain medicines as part of a shift towards community-based primary care delivered by teams.

We will implement a National Pharmacare Plan that, through the advantage of bulk buying, will actually save Canadians $11 billion each year. It will especially benefit senior citizens, who spend the most on prescription medication, and it will allow physicians and doctors to better track if patients are at risk of dangerous over-medication. We will be far more rigorous in assessing new drug applications. We will apply the gold standard for pharmaceutical review to ensure we reject drugs shown to hurt more people than they heal. At the same time, our Pharmacare Plan will provide much needed coverage to the millions of Canadians who are forced to pay out-of-pocket for prescription medication every year.

3. The vast majority of prescribed medication information is still shared via handwritten or faxed prescriptions. E-prescriptions ultimately improves patient safety and overall quality of care by reducing dispensing errors, managing potential adverse drug reactions and ensuring timely transmission of prescription information from practitioner to pharmacist. Unfortunately, Canada lags far behind in the use of e-prescriptions across the country. **Will your party commit to supporting the development of a national e-prescription plan?**

Yes.

The benefits of shifting handwritten, hard copy medical records online are enormous. The Green Party wants the federal government to demonstrate leadership in health care by working with the provinces to ensure that every Canadian has an electronic health record that is comprehensive, accessible and mobile - guaranteeing a central coordination point for their care, whether preventive, acute, or chronic. The need for electronic records is evident in prescriptions where ensuring the right patient receives the appropriate medication is paramount to not only effective treatment, but to avoid possibly calamitous adverse drug reactions.

Greens would work with the provinces to advocate for and expand the use of e-prescriptions as part of our National Pharmacare plan.

4. Child immunization rates in Canada are falling short of herd immunity. Canada is also falling behind on the issue of early childhood immunization, compared to other industrialized countries. Pharmacists are playing a leading role in providing immunization services across the country but more needs to be done. **What would your party do to improve child immunization rates in Canada?**

The immunization of children against disease and illness must be a top priority for policy makers. Canadian public health suffers from a lack of coordination in immunization across
provinces and territories. There are no standards for the coverage and schedules of routine immunization, and the federal government is nowhere to be found. It is no surprise that some infectious diseases we thought we had eradicated are making a comeback. The Green Party commends the role that pharmacists play in providing immunization services across the country and we commit to providing support for providers moving forward. Green MPs will call for a national immunization strategy coordinated across provinces and territories.