

Cancer Survivor Network

Response from Jess Spindler, Liberal candidate for MPP Toronto-St. Paul's

Question 1: Rehabilitation for cancer survivors

- A. If elected to government, how will you ensure that cancer survivors have timely access to rehabilitation services in Ontario that are timely and free?**

Ontario Liberals have a strong track record of investing in health care services in the community. Our plan will invest in more rehabilitation services for cancer survivors.

Cancer rehabilitation in the form of occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech language pathology are available across cancer centres, with additional services made available in some regions specific to cancer (e.g. St John's Rehab, Toronto Rehab). Patients may access services through home and community care if they are eligible and this is managed through the LHINs. We will work with groups such as the Cancer Survivor Network to continue to ensure that these services meet the needs of cancer survivors.

Our plan is also investing in over \$650 million for more home care hours and expanded services and it includes a historic investment of \$2.1 billion for mental health which includes access to publicly-funded psychotherapy.

- B. If elected as an MPP, would you be interested in serving on the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network's All-party Cancer Caucus which meets twice a year at Queen's Park and is currently studying gaps in rehabilitation services in Ontario and how to fill them?**

Yes, I would.

Question 2: Timely access to medications

If elected to government, will you commit to ensuring that:

- A) All cancer patients in Ontario receive timely access to the medications they need when they need them?**

Ontario Liberals are very proud to have introduced OHIP+ so that prescription drugs are free for everyone under 25 in Ontario. Over 4 million free prescriptions have already been filled since the introduction of OHIP+ in January, 2018. And as part of our plan starting in August 2019 all seniors 65 and older will have access to prescription drugs completely free, no co-pay, no deductible. And we will work to get to national pharmacare, because that is the best way forward. But irrespective of whether we get to full national pharmacare, we will not stop until all Ontarians are covered.

We recognize all of the leadership that cancer patient groups have played in championing the need for affordable and accessible drug programs. We are committed to ensuring that all patients, including cancer patients, have access to the medications they need to be healthy.

- B) The cost of oral cancer drugs is covered?**

Ontario Liberals historic expansion of medicare means all children and youth under 25 currently have access to free oral cancer drugs. Starting in August 2019 all seniors over 65 will also have access to oral cancer drugs listed on the Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary completely free.

The ODB program already covers many take-home cancer drugs for eligible recipients, including oral chemotherapy. Since 2015, 89 per cent of those requiring cancer drugs have been covered, including seniors, residents of long-term care homes and recipients of social assistance.

Ontario also funds injectable cancer drugs in outpatient settings through the New Drug Funding Program (NDFP).

We recognize the importance of access to medication as we have demonstrated with our commitment to pharmacare - OHIP+, low income seniors program and the next step OHIP+ for Seniors. Ontario Liberals are committed to ensuring that everyone regardless of age or disease to have access to the medications they need.

Ontario Liberals increased funding for oral cancer drugs by 25% last year bringing the total spend to \$467 million. The NDP's plan proposes an increase of 9% for take home cancer drugs.

Ontario Liberals are committed to further expansion of pharmacare and ensuring access to medication is not a barrier for patients when transitioning from hospital to home

Question 3: Lymphedema

If elected to government, will you commit to ensuring that cancer patients and survivors and other Ontarians with lymphedema receive timely and free treatment for this health condition?

Ontario is a leader in cancer care. We have a system that has the best survival rates for prostate, breast, colorectal and lung cancers in Canada.

We know that cancer survivors can experience challenges accessing the care they need to support their recovery and healing process. Ontario Liberals are committed to changing that.

Working with patients and people with lived experience Ontario Liberals will advance the continuum of patient care available so that there are more supports and health survivors available for cancer survivors, including those struggling with lymphedema.

Question 4: PSA Screening in Ontario

Is your party in favour of implementing free PSA testing for prostate cancer in Ontario as a population-wide screening tool?

Ontario Liberals are responsible for a comprehensive cancer screening program. We launched the Cancer Screening Program and it is saving lives. It is imperative that Ontarians get screened for cancer, and we have worked hard to expand screening services and availability across the province.



We are committed to working with clinicians and patient groups to ensure our cancer screening is evidence-based and protecting Ontarians.

Ontario Liberal Party

10 St. Mary Street, Suite 210, Toronto, ON M4Y 1P9
Phone: 416.961.3800, 1.800.268.7250 | Fax: 416.323.9425
Email: info@ontarioliberal.ca | Web: www.ontarioliberal.ca