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Dear Jackie:

Thank you for your letter in which you raise three questions about the Progressive Conservative Party's priorities for cancer care in Newfoundland and Labrador. Let me address them one by one.

***Question 1: Colorectal Cancer Screening - Removing the Age Restriction:
If elected, will you work to remove age restrictions and ensure all Newfoundland and Labrador residents can access colorectal cancer screening?***

A government I lead will ensure our choices of medical protocols are made with healthcare professionals who have subject-matter expertise, with the best interests of people guiding our priorities.

I believe early screening, diagnosis and effective treatment is imperative to improve outcomes and reduce needless suffering. This is especially important for people dealing with cancer. Early action saves lives. It also reduces costs, which is all the more reason to embrace this course of action as the right one. Given the prevalence of colorectal cancer in our province and the rising rates among younger people, we need to ensure the people at risk are getting screened, diagnosed and treated before their cancer progresses. Cancer is best treated when detected early, and it can only be detected early when people have early access to appropriate screening.

***Question 2: Wildland Firefighters Presumptive Cancer Coverage:
Given the occupational health risks wildland firefighters are exposed to, if elected, will you ensure wildland firefighters are granted presumptive cancer coverage?***

I look forward to working with stakeholders and Workplace NL to explore greater coverage for wildland firefighters. Our Party has been a leader in fighting for presumptive coverage for first responders. We will also provide gear to better protect our wildland firefighters from harm. It was shameful to see our firefighters struggling to cope with summer fires while wearing improper gear designed for other conditions. This placed their lives at risk while they were working to save the lives and homes of others. We must do better.