



LIBERAL
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Timely Access
to Quality Health Care



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As a Province, we have much to show for our unwavering commitment to health care:

- The number of physicians practicing in PEI on a full-time basis has gone from 196 in 2007 to 230, and access to a family doctor has dramatically improved
- Spending on physician services has risen by 75 per cent since 2007, with many new specialists ensuring Islanders have access to new health services
- Drug spending for Islanders has expanded by almost 40 per cent since 2007 with a special emphasis on helping seniors and Islanders with high cost drugs
- Enhancements have been made in preschool autism assessments, speech language pathology and pediatric physiotherapy
- Palliative care—helping those most in need—has taken major steps forward with the Palliative Care Home Drug program and the recently opened Palliative Care Centre
- Homecare spending to allow Islanders the choice of remaining in their own homes has increased by 70 per cent. The number of long term care beds in the province has increased by 150 since 2007, with investments in new manors for Souris, Alberton, Summerside, Charlottetown, Tyne Valley and Montague.
- \$9 million has been invested in new mental health and addictions services, including a 12-bed Youth Recovery Facility in Summerside and a 12-bed Youth Mental Health Unit in Charlottetown.

A New Liberal Government under the Leadership of Wade MacLauchlan will build on this focus of improving access, quality and efficiency by, among other things, enhancing primary care, improving access to specialists, and expanding wellness and prevention initiatives.

Enhancing Primary Care

Primary care is the cornerstone of our health system and is the first point of contact for most patients. The Liberal Government has worked to improve both access to, and the quality of, our primary care system. Primary care delivery is about much more than hospitals and doctors. It is about creating an integrated system of health professionals working together to provide Islanders with the right service, at the right place, at the right time.

The Liberal Party's approach to building on our system of primary care health delivery embraces a number of strategic directions, including:

- Improving Access to Specialized Services
- Recruiting and Retaining Doctors and Nurses
- Expanding the Role of Nurse Practitioners
- Enhancing the Role of Community Pharmacists
- Leveraging the Services of Paramedics
- Increasing Emphasis on Wellness and Disease Prevention



Improving Access to Specialized Services

The Liberal Party understands that patients waiting for specialty health services face undue stress in addition to their underlying health conditions. That is why we have made a priority of working diligently to reduce wait times. A core element of reducing wait times has been investments in medical specialists and infrastructure required for treatment.

A New Liberal Government under the Leadership of Wade MacLauchlan will:

- Purchase a new linear accelerator for the PEI Cancer Treatment Center to reduce waiting times for radiation therapy and increase the quality and efficiency of care for Island cancer patients.
- Add financial and infrastructure resources to reduce wait times for elective procedures such as cataract, hip and knee surgery.
- Leverage the QEH's day surgery to free up operating rooms and acute care beds to help reduce surgical wait times in other areas.
- Recruit specialists in key areas tied to wait times, including rheumatology, oncology, neurology, psychiatry and obstetrics.
- Reduce waiting times for MRI and CAT scan testing and results.
- Expand pediatric health services in key areas such as pre-school autism assessments, physiotherapy, speech language pathology and audiology.

Recruiting and Retaining Doctors and Nurses

The Liberal Party believes that we need to constantly strive to ensure that our health system has access to skilled health care workers.

Doctor recruitment has been a key priority for the Liberal Government. In 2014 alone, the Province recruited 10 new doctors to the Island. Our success in recruiting doctors has extended well beyond Charlottetown and Summerside. In fact, in 2014 and 2015 new physicians have been recruited to work in Alberton, Tignish, Montague, and Souris. To this end, the Family Medicine Residency Program established in 2009 continues to play a key role in attracting doctors.

We have also made great strides in attracting and retaining Prince Edward Island's nursing staff. Our success in developing and accessing high quality nursing talent for our health system is a product of the innovative partnership between the Province, UPEI and Holland College. From 2007 to 2014, the number of nurses educated yearly in our Island institutions has increased by over 27 per cent, and upwards of 90 per cent of all our graduates find employment in P.E.I.'s health system. The Province has added 10 Nurse Practitioner, 24 RN, and 82 LPN positions since 2007.



A New Liberal Government under the Leadership of Wade MacLauchlan will:

- Continue to recruit family doctors to rural P.E.I.
- Work with the Provincial Residency Program for Family Medicine to attract and retain medical graduates.
- Advance our work with Holland College and UPEI to attract students into nursing programs.
- Enhance the use of scholarship and return-in-service agreements to retain nursing graduates.
- Work with stakeholders to expand the scope of practice of all nurses

Expanding the Role of Nurse Practitioners

The Liberal Party believes in the critically valuable role that nurse practitioners play in our health system. In 2007 when the Liberal Party formed government, there were two nurses working as nurse practitioners in this Province. In 2010, the Province, in partnership with the University of Prince Edward Island, established a program to educate nurse practitioners to help address a pervasive shortage.

Today, there are approximately 12 nurse practitioners working in various settings on Prince Edward. For example, nurse practitioners work at the Collaborative Emergency Centre in Western Prince Edward Island. Nurse practitioners also work in clinic settings, such as the walk-in clinic in Morrell.

A New Liberal Government under the Leadership of Wade MacLauchlan will:

- Increase the number of nurse practitioners to 20 over the next three years.
- Work with UPEI's School of Nursing on return-in-service grants to ensure that nurse practitioners educated on P.E.I, stay and work on the Island.
- Continue to expand the scope of practice so nurse practitioners are able to provide a full spectrum of health services in collaboration with family doctors.
- Develop a rural nurse practitioner recruitment program.

Enhancing the Role of Community Pharmacists

The Liberal Party supports expanding the role of pharmacists, freeing up physicians to treat more serious illnesses. The Island's network of community pharmacies are staffed with highly trained health professionals who continue to play an important and evolving role in primary care.

A New Liberal Government under the Leadership of Wade MacLauchlan will:

- Expand the scope of practice of pharmacists to increase Islanders' access to timely health care services, including expanded minor ailments treatment
- Increase medication reviews for Island seniors to ensure the ongoing safety and appropriateness of medication usage.



- Leverage the role of pharmacies in rural communities to provide a greater range of health care services where access to a physician could be more limited.
- Build on the success of pharmacists' recent role in flu vaccinations by looking to broaden the scope of these vaccinations, as well as adult immunization measures.

Leveraging the Role of Paramedics

The Liberal Party believes that our Island is well-served by our paramedics. Holland College continues to play a key role in educating these health professionals, including its increasingly recognized program for Advanced Care Paramedics.

A New Liberal Government under the Leadership of Wade MacLauchlan will:

- Utilize Advanced Care Paramedics in Collaborative Emergency Care settings, in partnership with nurse practitioners and physicians.
- Establish a community paramedicine homecare program where paramedics go into seniors' homes to administer medical care.
- Expand the role that Advanced Care Paramedics can play in medication administration in emergency situations.

Increasing Emphasis on Wellness and Prevention

Wellness and disease prevention are key to the quality of life that Islanders live. As recently as January of 2015, the Province unveiled a new Provincial Wellness Strategy to focus efforts on this important health objective.

A New Liberal Government under the Leadership of Wade MacLauchlan will:

- Encourage increased physical activity of youth.
- Expand the use and availability of public infrastructure such as schools for off-hours physical activities for adults, particularly in rural areas during winter months.
- Enhance smoking cessation initiatives with a particular emphasis on youth.
- Improve access to programs, medications, and nicotine replacement therapies.
- Advance the promotion of healthy eating through public outreach and medical professionals.