

**\*CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY\*** *Under embargo until speech begins*

*Date:* **April 10, 2015 - Charlottetown**

Thank you Jordan.

Ladies and Gentlemen I am very proud to be here today ... with the full Liberal Team ... to make an announcement in relation to prescription drugs.

This week I have been travelling our province sharing with Islanders the Liberal vision for healthcare. This vision is focused on investing in our frontlines and ensuring our highly skilled health professionals have the opportunity to broaden the range of care they provide. This will help provide timely access to quality care for all Islanders.

We have outlined our plan to cut wait times for surgeries, recruit physicians to rural communities, double the number of nurse practitioners, and enable paramedics to play a greater role in the delivery of care.

These initiatives will give Islanders faster access to the care that they need closer to home – and when appropriate in their homes.

They will help address illnesses before they become more serious, free up physicians and alleviate pressure on emergency departments.

Today I will speak about another critical, and growing, component of healthcare.

The Liberal Party believes that access to much-needed medications is fundamental to quality health care.

We have made this issue a key priority.

Over the past seven years more than 220 drugs have been added to the Provincial Formulary... including many high-cost medications for cancer and other serious illnesses.

A Catastrophic Drug Plan has been implemented ... to make sure that Islanders suffering from serious medical conditions aren't financially devastated by expensive prescription drugs.

**Media Contact:** Grant Palmer • 902.393.7975 • [media@liberalpei.ca](mailto:media@liberalpei.ca)

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## Leader's Remarks

The Seniors' Drug Plan ... and a drug plan for those suffering from Diabetes ... have both been expanded.

We've signed an agreement to implement Canada's first hepatitis C model of care ... which offers curative therapy for those Islanders infected with this virus.

And recently we announced funding for a number of additional cancer drugs. As Liberals ... we believe that all Islanders ... regardless of their personal circumstances ... deserve access to the best care possible.

But we must always strive to do more ... and today I announce the next step.

At the present time about a third of Islanders do not have private drug coverage.

When these Islanders are prescribed ... for example ... a generic antibiotic for their sick child ... they go to the pharmacy and pay an average cost of 40 dollars ... and sometimes much more.

That is about to change.

I'm here today to announce the PEI Generic Drug Plan.

Under this Plan ... the average prescription cost for generic drugs for Islanders under 65 and without private coverage will be reduced by 50 per cent.

Under this Plan ... the maximum price for a generic drug prescription will be \$19.95 ... and this will apply to all of the more than 1,000 unique generic drugs in the Provincial Formulary.

The only exceptions will be narcotics ... for health and public policy reasons ... and drugs for diabetes ... which are already covered under a separate plan.

Islanders over 65 are ... of course ... covered by the Seniors' Drug Plan, which caps prescription costs at an even lower amount.

The PEI Generic Drug Plan will have a tremendous and positive impact on many Islanders.

Last year more than 400,000 individual prescriptions were written for generic drugs.

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## ***Leader's Remarks***

This initiative will cost approximately \$4 million.

We will pay for it by continuing to work hard ... on our own and in cooperation with other provincial governments ... to reduce the overall cost of the many drugs we fund.

Improved access to required medications will also improve the overall health of Islanders, leading to reduced pressure on our health care system.

Similarly, the initiatives I've announced earlier this week will help improve the overall health of Islanders, reducing the pressure on the system.

Ladies and gentlemen ... I am very proud to be here with the other members of our Team ... to make an announcement that I believe will have a very important and positive impact upon so many Islanders.

Putting this Plan into place will be the first thing we do.

Thank you.

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