

April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011

**Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health  
2011 Federal Election**

**1. Does your party platform contain anything related to mental health?**

The Green Party recognizes that the need for improved support for mental health involves a broad range of commitments. The Green Party notes that there are many failures in the current way our system treats mental health. Currently, there is a focus on treating acute health problems after they arise, and the system has failed to place sufficient priority on preventing illness in the first place. We have also failed to provide adequate services for mental health, especially for the young. Services to assist young people and others with addiction issues are woefully inadequate.

Not only must treatments be made available and direct medical support provided, we also must think holistically about the problem. That is why in our platform we have detailed a range of promises to address many of the pressing needs of the mental health care system. Two central planks of our plan include a national pharmacare system and a affordable housing strategy.

**Affordable housing**

The Green Party platform commits to 2.5 billion dollars in funding over the next three years to establish, in conjunction with the provinces, an affordable housing program. Our National Affordable Housing Program will provide sufficient funds annually through the CMHC to community-based agencies across Canada to:

- Ensure that an adequate supply of new subsidized affordable homes is built: 20,000 new and 10,000 rehabilitated affordable units per year for the next ten years using capital grants and changes in tax and mortgage insurance regulations.
- Provide rent supplements or shelter assistance for an additional 40,000 low-income households per year, for ten years.
- Provide credit and loan guarantees to non-profit housing organizations and cooperatives for the building and restoration of quality, energy-efficient housing for seniors, people with special needs, and low-income families.
- Support inclusionary housing by subsidizing private developers to include a percentage of affordable housing in their housing projects.
- Dedicate funding to the co-operative housing sector to enable more new affordable housing projects to proceed.

**National Pharmacare**

If elected, the Green Party of Canada would create a universal pharmacare program to facilitate bulk drug purchasing. That is why we are committed to providing 900 million dollars in funding in the next three years for national pharmacare. This national agency would follow the principles of



the gold-standard for evidence based assessment of the risks and benefits of pharmaceuticals – the Therapeutics Initiative at University of British Columbia. It is critical that no conflict of interest corrupt the drug assessment process. Drugs showing a greater harmful than beneficial effect will not be part of a national Pharmacare programme. By bulk buying prescription drugs, based on a strong evidence-based assessment, costs will come down for the provincial delivery of health care. We will also move towards creating a successful generic drug market in Canada. As patents for a number of commonly prescribed drugs are set to expire in the near future, this presents a great opportunity for the government to step in and provide less expensive generic drugs. The Green Party accepts the principle advocated by the Canadian Diabetes Association that no Canadian should spend more than 3% of his or her total after tax earnings on necessary prescribed medications and other treatments.

Other points from our comprehensive mental health plan:

- Increase transfer funding for non-institutionalized mental health patients including children and youth to provide adequate community-based support and outpatient and inpatient care by mental health practitioners, including in rural Canada where lack of facilities and trained professionals is acute.
- Support a public health initiative to reduce the use of psychoactive drugs through better rehabilitation and prevention programs, especially for children.
- Provide increased funding for a robust comprehensive mental health strategy for all Canadians in need.
- Require greater involvement of people dealing with personal mental health problems in research planning, policy development, program evaluation, and other decisions that affect their lives and communities.

## **2. Do you support parity between resources made available for treatment of mental and physical health problems?**

The Green Party of Canada subscribes to the World Health Organization's definition of health as "a complete state of physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." We see mental health as an integral component of human well being and will resource it accordingly.

## **3. Do you support the specific inclusion of initiatives related to mental health and addictions in the 2004 federal-provincial health accord?**

Yes. The Green Party of Canada is committed to providing both a robust and comprehensive mental health strategy and addiction strategy for all Canadians in need. We have thus far failed to provide adequate services for mental health and addiction, especially for the young. Services to assist Canadians with addiction issues are also woefully inadequate. The Green Party will work with the provinces to ensure that both of these issues are addressed in an effective and comprehensive fashion.



**4. Less than one-third of persons with mental health problems receive needed services. What will your party do to enhance access to mental health services and address the shortage of mental health professionals in Canada? And in this riding?**

A Green Government will institute a comprehensive approach to mental health issues. As part of our comprehensive plan, Greens will increase transfer funding for non-institutionalized mental health patients including children and youth to provide adequate community-based support and outpatient and inpatient care by mental health practitioners, including in rural Canada where lack of facilities and trained professionals is acute.

Green Party candidates will respond to the specific requests regarding the needs in their ridings.

**5. Will your party commit to increasing funding for mental health and mental illness research?**

Yes. The Green Party supports increasing funding for mental health and mental illness research. However, we believe that there should be greater involvement of people dealing with personal mental health problems in research planning, policy development, program evaluation, and other decisions that affect their lives and communities.

**6. What will your party do to support individuals, families, the workplace and communities when it comes to mental health and illness?**

The Green Party of Canada believes it is time to re-visit a major policy initiative – the use of a negative income tax, or Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI) for all - to take the next step in ensuring that we eliminate poverty. The use of a GLI could eradicate poverty and allow social services to concentrate on problems of mental health and addiction. It will also ensure that all Canadians are provided an income that can meet their basic needs and are not forced to choose between proper health care and . The essential plan is to provide a regular payments to every Canadian without regard to a needs test. The level of the payment will be regionally set at a level above poverty, but at a bare subsistence level to encourage additional income generation. No surveillance or follow-up is required. This will provide a guaranteed level of support individuals, families and communities as they address mental health and illness. To be cost-effective, however, government will require time to negotiate a coherent program with the provinces/territories and other levels of government. The use of a GLI could eliminate poverty and allow social services to concentrate on problems of mental health and addiction.

