

Election 2019: 15 questions for all federal political parties

August 2019

About Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights

Action Canada for Sexual Health & Rights – formerly Planned Parenthood Canada – is a progressive, pro-choice organization committed to advancing and upholding sexual and reproductive health and rights in Canada and globally. Action Canada promotes health, wellbeing, and rights related to sexuality and reproduction through direct support, referrals, and providing information to the people who need it most, by partnering with groups and organizations on a range of campaigns using a collaborative, movement-building approach, and by working with decision-makers to advance progressive policies on access to abortion, stigma-free healthcare, gender equality, LGBTQ rights, and inclusive sex-ed.

Abortion

- 1. Barriers to abortion access in Canada are much worse for people who live outside urban centres, in the North and on First Nations reserves. What steps would your party take to address them?**

New Democrats believe that everyone deserves safe, accessible abortion and reproductive health care services – no matter where they live or how much money they make. To expand abortion access for people in rural, remote and Northern areas we will reinvest in our health system and ensure that the provinces provide access to abortion in all areas of the country.

It's time for the federal government to step up to close the health gap in Indigenous communities. A New Democrat government will support Indigenous health self-determination and ensure that people can get the treatment they need in their community through investments in Indigenous health care infrastructure and diagnostic equipment. We would also support a full range of reproductive health options in Indigenous communities, including support for Indigenous midwives and Indigenous birth centres.

- 2. Due to regulation 84-20, New Brunswick is the only province in Canada where a person must pay out of pocket to get an abortion in a freestanding clinic. What steps would your party take to end this discrimination?**

New Democrats will use all powers available to the federal government to enforce the *Canada Health Act* and ensure that the provinces make medical and surgical abortion fully available to people who need it, without barriers like out of pocket costs and limits on the location of insured services.

- 3. Health Canada publishes a range of health-related information. Meanwhile, anti-choice organizations continue to publish and disseminate misleading information about abortion. If elected, what would your party do to make sure everyone could access accurate, evidence-based information about abortion? What strategies would your party propose to eliminate the barriers created by anti-choice organizations on access to abortion care?**

The federal government has an important role to play in ensuring that all Canadians can access accurate information about health issues, including abortion and reproductive rights. A New Democrat government would ensure that Health Canada promotes accurate information about abortion and dispels myths, so that Canadians can rely on a trusted source for correct, evidence-based facts about medical and surgical abortion. We would encourage provinces to create safe access zones around facilities where abortion services are provided, so that people can access the care they need and staff can work without fear of harassment. Where anti-choice organizations use false information about abortion in advertisements, we would work with the Ad Standards Council and through legal means to shut down misleading advertising.



Sexuality Education

1. **If any province or territory attempted to roll back their sexuality education curriculum, what action would your party take?**

All young Canadians need to be able to access accurate, inclusive information about health and sexuality. A New Democrat government would oppose ideological measures to roll back or limit sexual health and sexuality education.

2. **Does your party support the need for a Government of Canada Strategy to improve sexuality education throughout Canada, that would include funding for awareness raising and training of professional sexual health educators?**

Yes, a New Democratic government would work with the provinces and territories to develop a strategy to improve and expand sexuality education across Canada, including support for training of educators.

3. **Canada currently does not collect comprehensive data on sexual health indicators. Would your party task Statistics Canada to collect data around sexual health indicators, to support better public health policy, and strengthen sex ed curriculums and implementation?**

Yes, New Democrats are committed to improving data collection around sexual health indicators.

Sex work

1. **Does your party support the repeal of the 2014 Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act?**

New Democrats have consistently opposed C-36 and divisive on the issue of sex work, health and safety. This bill does not respond to the Supreme Court's ruling in the Bedford case, and has not improved sex workers' or community safety.

Unfortunately, despite promising to deal with harmful Conservative crime legislation, the Liberals have done nothing to fix the situation over the past four years.

Immediately after this election, New Democrats will bring C-36 before the Justice Committee for a full review, and ensure that sex workers are central to determining how we build a comprehensive strategy to better protect and support their health and safety.

2. **Does your party commit to including sex workers in any consultation and study that leads to policies that affect them and their work?**

Yes, sex workers must be centrally involved in any consultation or study that develops policies impacting their work.

3. **What steps would your party take to eliminate the violence, stigma, and harassment experienced by sex workers under the current legal framework?**

New Democrats are committed to engaging and listening to sex workers about their lived experience, and to involving them in decisions that will impact them. We focus on working with sex workers and communities in order to build a comprehensive strategy to end the violence and stigma that is all too often their today. This will include reviewing and updating laws to ensure they protect, not stigmatize, sex workers.



Pharmacare

1. **Does your party support a universal, single-payer pharmacare strategy? If so, when would such a strategy be launched?**

New Democrats are proud to be the only party fighting for the immediate creation of a universal, comprehensive pharmacare program in Canada. Our plan would make sure that all Canadians can access the prescription medicine they need with their health card, not their credit card – starting immediately, with a system fully up and running in 2020.

2. **Does your party support the creation of a program to universally cover the cost of all contraceptives in advance of a national pharmacare strategy?**

As the NDP pharmacare plan starts immediately in 2020, contraceptives will be covered right away under our plan.

3. **Does your party agree that *all* medications and devices that support sexual and reproductive health should be prioritized on Canada’s national pharmacare formulary?**

Under a New Democrat government, Canada’s formulary would be determined by an arm’s length body based on the best available scientific evidence about what is safe and effective, and what provides the best value for money. A wide range of medications and devices that support sexual and reproductive health of Canadians would be carefully evaluated by this group and New Democrats are committed to offering the broadest possible coverage for reproductive health.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights globally

1. **Does your party support a commitment of 0.7% GNI for official development assistance? If so, what timeline does your party propose to reach the target?**

Yes, it’s time for Canada to step up our contributions to development assistance. After decades of cuts under Conservatives and under-funding under the Liberals, Canada’s share of official development assistance continues to be well below the OECD average – and the lowest level among G7 countries. As a percentage of GNI, Canada’s development assistance under the Liberals is actually lower now than it was under the Harper Conservatives. A New Democrat government would immediately re-invest in development assistance with the goal of reaching 0.7% in a decade.

2. **Does your party support a targeted investment of at least \$500M/year for the neglected areas of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in development assistance (abortion, contraceptives, advocacy and adolescent SRHR)?**

Yes, New Democrats support targeted investment in improving services for neglected areas of sexual health around the world, including abortion, contraceptives, advocacy and adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights.

3. **What would your party do to ensure increased financial support for local and grassroots women’s rights organizations globally?**

It’s important that Canada’s feminist international policy be backed by funding – which is why so many people were disappointed when the Liberal commitments come without funding. In the same way that New Democrats are committed to supporting the advocacy and front-line services provided by women, girls and LGBTQ+-led organizations in Canada, we would also make sure that this support extends organizations around the world.

