

Response to the Canadian Paediatric Society 2024 Provincial Election Survey:

Supporting child and youth mental health

What will your party do to improve timely access to publicly funded mental health services for children and youth?

The province is clearly still lacking properly resourced mental health supports. We have serious gaps in primary care access and in the number of trained mental health professionals. Only a few days ago, the New Brunswick Child and Youth Advocate, Kelly Lamrock, outlined in his report a spike in children presenting serious and escalated mental health issues. Our party wants to transform mental health care in New Brunswick by creating a system that is accessible, compassionate and truly supportive when people need to use it.

A Holt government is committed to reducing wait times for mental health care. This will be accomplished through the 30 team-based community care clinics we've announced. . We will empower front-line service providers through community-based case management approaches, ensuring they can deliver the highest level of care. In addition, a Holt government will increase the number of residency positions for psychiatrists and clinical psychologists.

It is also critical to create a supportive environment in schools where mental health is prioritized and addressed proactively. We will develop a robust retention and training plan for mental health professionals, particularly those working in schools.

Finally, with a newly created position of a Mental Health Advocate, New Brunswickers can rest easy knowing there is a team who is listening and focused on mental health at all times.

Strengthening health human resources

What will your party do to recruit and retain healthcare providers to serve the needs of children and youth with complex medical needs?

Our team is committed to building a well-supported, skilled workforce dedicated to providing New Brunswickers the healthcare services they need, including serving children and youth with complex medical cases while ensuring that healthcare providers find rewarding, sustainable careers in their field.

A Holt government will heavily invest in community care clinics, providing healthcare workers with the team-based approach to service delivery they want to work in. We will provide dedicated non-clinical staff and administrative support for these clinics in order to alleviate the administrative burden off healthcare providers so they can focus on patients instead of paperwork. This will make the sector more



attractive for new professionals entering the sector and provide the existing staff with the collaborative service delivery model they have been asking for.

The clinics will be staffed with a range of healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurse practitioners, mental health professionals, social workers, dieticians and more, offering comprehensive and collaborative care under one roof thereby increasing accessibility for individuals and families with complex medical needs.

The community care clinics fit into a larger retention and recruitment plan, aimed at improving healthcare staffing by valuing our nurses, doctors and healthcare professionals. This includes creating a multi-pronged plan for all healthcare professionals to improve working conditions, prioritize support for their wellness and increase retention. We will immediately deliver retention payments to our nurses to show our respect for them and examine other tools that aid retention and recruitment. We will improve the compensation model for doctors and primary care providers, including fair pay for those who perform after-hours care, and we will work with Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick and Centre de formation médicale du Nouveau-Brunswick to create more training and residency seats. Finally, we will leverage existing healthcare knowledge by working with regulators to improve foreign credential recognition for nurses, doctors and other healthcare professionals already in the province as well as expand healthcare professionals' scope of practice so that all care providers are able to work to the full extent of their training.

Our approach will be based on collaboration and co-creation. We will work with communities, front-line workers and experts to ensure local realities are respected and factored into our plan as we develop and implement innovative ways to recruit and retain healthcare professionals, including those specialized in pediatrics.

Tackling childhood poverty

What will your party do to reduce rates of childhood poverty and food insecurity?

The cost of living is at an all-time high and New Brunswickers have felt abandoned by their government as they struggle to put food on their table and ensure they have a roof over their heads. We have heard directly from parents who are stretched and stressed and from teachers who have been doing their best to fill the gaps at school, often time out of their own pocket.

Our team is focused on helping families make ends meet. A Holt government will immediately remove the provincial sales tax (PST) on electricity bills, providing 10% relief from home energy bills. We will immediately remove the Higgs Gas Tax, saving New Brunswickers 4 cents a litre at the pumps, and we will implement a 3% rent cap to protect renters from unpredictable rent spikes.



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One in four students are going to school hungry. They spend the day worrying about their next meal and trying to learn on an empty stomach. Our team wants students to thrive and for that they need to be well fed and feel safe, which is why we are committed to implementing a universal free breakfast across the province with pay-what-you-can lunches, leveraging local, New Brunswick food where possible.

We will work with experts, not-for-profit organizations and community groups to understand the root causes of poverty and provide relief. It is critical to reduce childhood poverty and to ensure that all children have access to nutritious food and the resources they need to thrive in our province.

Respecting transgender and gender-diverse children and youth

How will your party uphold and protect the health and rights of transgender and gender-diverse children and youth?

Access to primary healthcare is a challenge across New Brunswick, and that is especially true for gender-diverse and transgender children and youth. A Holt government will ensure billing processes align with best practices to provide members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community with quality health and mental health care, including longer appointment times and gender-affirming care.

The politicization of the education system has been an effort to distract from the current government's failures. The Child and Youth Advocate developed an updated policy which we feel strikes a good balance between ensuring that the rights of vulnerable students are protected and understanding that parents need to be involved more within the education system. Our priority is the wellbeing of New Brunswick's students so that they can thrive in a learning environment, and we are committed to bringing forward the stability, balance, and vision to achieve that.

