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Marie Adèle Davis
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Dear Ms Davis,

Thank you for engaging with us in this critical election. And thank you for the valuable advocacy work your organization conducts on behalf of children and families.

The Manitoba NDP agree that strengthening child and youth mental health, improving immunization coverage, tackling childhood poverty, and increasing educational supports are key for the health and wellness of children and youth in Manitoba.

It will take hard work to reverse the damage done by the Pallister-Stefanson government. They cut the Healthy Baby Prenatal Benefit and the Healthy Baby Milk Program. They fired lactation consultants for new moms. They cut supports for kids who need help walking and swallowing. They allowed the biggest hospital in the North to go without hot water for months and cut birthing services there.

The Manitoba NDP led by Wab Kinew will reverse those regressive policies. And we will work with experts and use evidence-based solutions to improve health outcomes for children and youth.

Strengthening 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 first step in improving our health care system is to recruit, retain and train the healthcare workers we need to tackle wait lists and address the demand for services, including mental health providers. We will stop the cuts and make the healthcare investments the province needs.

The Manitoba NDP will begin to repair the government's relationship with healthcare experts, rebuilding trust, listening to the advice of frontline workers and treating them with respect. To improve access to primary care, which is the first step in getting mental health support for so many Manitobans, we will expand team-based health care and open five new family medical centres across the province. These teams can include mental health workers, and we will invest in training, hiring and retention of mental-health experts for children and youth more broadly so help is available.

We will also implement a province-wide suicide prevention strategy which will include a focus on vulnerable, queer and two-spirit youth.

Improving immunization coverage: What will your party do to improve immunization coverage rates and protect against a rise in vaccine-preventable diseases?

During the pandemic, Manitoba had some of the worst outcomes in North America. We want to make sure Manitobans are never again sent out of province due to overcrowded, overburdened hospitals. To support prevention, the Manitoba NDP will offer expanded immunization clinics across the province to make it easier for people to access vaccination.

We will train and hire more primary care doctors so families across the province can get medical help, including immunization, when they need it.

We will also combat misinformation by reaching out to families through education and advertising programs to allay fears and ensure parents understand the benefits of immunization.

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

A Manitoba NDP government will invest in education at every stage. We'll reverse the PC cuts and underfunding to education, so we can help our kids and young people reach their full potential.

One of our earliest campaign commitments is our plan to implement a universal nutrition program in every school so no child goes to school hungry and every student can focus on learning. We will increase the Healthy Child Prenatal benefit to help new moms feed their families healthy food, increase access to primary health care for pregnant women struggling with addiction, and prioritize families with children in our efforts to end chronic homelessness using the Houston model.

No government can solve issues like poverty and food insecurity alone. We'll invest in non-profit community social services to help support vulnerable families. We will ensure we make progress by restoring the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet and introducing a comprehensive baby and maternal health strategy.

Increasing educational supports: How will your party increase access to school-based developmental and educational supports and help children and youth recover from the learning losses and educational disruptions of the pandemic?

We will hire more teachers and restore a cap on class sizes in early years, so children will receive more one-on-one attention when they need it. We will also hire more clinicians and educational assistants to help vulnerable children catch up and to prevent them from falling behind.

Again, we appreciate your advocacy on behalf of children and for the valuable work paediatricians do. We look forward to working with the Canadian Paediatric Association to reverse the damage done by the Pallister-Stefanson government and make healthcare in Manitoba better, together.

Sincerely,

The Manitoba NDP