

Seniors Vote 2016 Q & A

Manitoba Liberals Responses to Seniors Vote

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT/PARTICIPATION

How will your government recognize the need for social participation by older adults and support increased funding to Centres?

We are very interested in the social well-being of our seniors and are looking for ways to get them more engaged in life in Manitoba. We are interested in the concept of regional senior's centres and the possibility of childcare centres attached to seniors centres to create greater engagement for seniors. This has been wildly successful in other jurisdictions in North America. We will look for other ways to engage our seniors socially and are fully aware of the need for a meaningful existence.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

How will you support and fund an affordable housing strategy that will ensure available, clean and comfortable dwellings for Manitoba's elderly population?

On clean affordable housing we will continue the practice of increasing the affordable housing stock, but ensuring people can afford to live where they are now is a more admirable goal. Seniors should not have to leave the neighbourhoods they are comfortable in. That is our focus, ensuring people can stay in their homes.

RETIREMENT INCOME SECURITY

How will you continue to work toward the elimination of poverty among Manitoba seniors?

Liberal Leader Rana Bokhari is very concerned about the ability of Manitobans to make ends meet, and that is especially concerning for seniors and those on a fixed income. To this end we are looking to tackle the problem head on. We will do a pilot project on Guaranteed Annual Income also known as Mincome from the pilot done in Dauphin in the 1970s. We believe that offering every Manitoban a Mincome will mean they will have enough to live a healthy and productive life. If the results of this pilot show us what we believe they will we have the potential to not only save money in healthcare, justice, education, family services and other departments, but we will have a healthier society.

We have also promised a two year rent freeze on all apartment rentals in Manitoba. This is to take a pause and allow us to work with stakeholders to get a handle on rapidly increasing rents. We acknowledge that costs continue to rise, but when rent increases at more than double the rate of inflation we have a problem. Over the past several years rents have risen, on average, more than double the rate of inflation or the benchmarks under rent control. Rent control is broken and we need to fix it.

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Will you support the improvement of CPP, which is a universal Defined Benefit Pension Plan?

Will you support the Defined Benefit Pension Plan to the individual and to future tax payers?

We are not opposed to discussions on improvements to CPP, but as you know, even CPP is limited to how much an individual pays into it. We prefer to explore the benefits of a Mincome that could replace virtually all government programs and simply provide a secure and predictable level of income to all Manitobans. We hope the federal government will support our pilot and consider Mincome on a national level.

HEALTH CARE - Hearing, Vision and Oral Health

How will you commit to addressing the cost of oral health services, vision care and hearing aids for all Manitobans?

We share your concerns about seniors and all Manitobans access to vision, hearing and dental costs. Our focus is to find a means for all Manitobans to be able to afford the basics of food, shelter and healthcare. This is why we are committed to covering mental health services under medicare. By seriously looking at a Mincome or Guaranteed Annual Income we can tackle many issues associated with too little money. We will work with your group to find solutions to the cost of hearing aids, glasses and dental work.

COST OF AMBULANCE SERVICE

Will you commit to addressing the punitive cost of ambulance transportation for people who have little or no choice in its use?

Ambulance costs are too high, period. We will reduce these costs as has been done in other provinces. The idea that anyone chooses not to call an ambulance because they don't feel they can afford it. That simply cannot happen in a modern society like ours.

DEMENTIA CARE

What are your long range plans for addressing the ever increasing concerns about dementia?

On Dementia we need to ensure people suffering with this debilitating condition are enjoying the best quality of life possible. As we live longer the chance of dementia or other brain related illness continues to grow. We will work with experts to ensure we are able to accommodate the increased numbers of people living with dementia and work to find ways to reduce its instances.

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Will this commitment by the Province of Manitoba remain the same?

We will abide by the 2017 health accord as long as our partners are keen to keep in place as it is, but will be happy to discuss it with Ottawa to ensure we are getting the most out of the accord and ensure flexibility to Manitoba-specific areas.

What position will your government be taking on National Pharmacare?

We are encouraged the federal government is engaged on a national pharmacare plan and hope we are able to work together as a country and provinces to see the best results for our citizens. The cost of drugs must come down if we are able to manage health care into the future, but that said we must also promote lifestyles that decrease our dependence on drugs.

HEMECARE

Would your provincial government adhere to national standards for wait times, home care, prescription drugs and team based primary health care?

In regard to homecare we feel this is one of the keys to ensuring people can stay in their homes longer and take pressure off the medical system. Investments in early intervention have proven to speed recovery and make it more likely that people will be able to remain independent longer. Rana Bokhari knows what many Manitobans and Canadians are going through when caring for loved ones at home. Her parents live with her and she is their advocate and primary supporter. We have spent many sessions with those who advocate for team based health care and are certainly open to working with health care providers and others to examine how this could improve both results and access.

TRANSPORTATION

I am sure you are aware of the magnitude of the transportation issues facing Senior Manitobans. How will you address this issue if elected?

Regarding transportation we are already taking a proactive approach to increasing the availability of transportation by allowing ride-sharing services like Uber to enter the province. This will be especially important to communities that don't have taxi service now as this will create an industry that responds to the needs of the population with part-time drivers looking to make a little extra money. Aside from that we do need to ensure seniors are able to access transportation especially accessible transportation and will continue to fund these services and look for ways to enhance them.

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HEALTHY AGING, QUALITY OF LIFE

How will your government commit to an all department approach that promotes and supports healthy aging in which Older Manitobans are confirmed as an integral part of our culture?

How will your government commit to providing affordable opportunities for older adults to engage in regular physical activities that contribute to their functional ability for daily living?

How will your government commit to the health and well-being of all Manitobans across their lifespan?

We must, as a society, become more active from the start of our lives to the end. We are committed to working with young Manitobans to increase their awareness and interest in physical activity and must work with our seniors to get them up and active as much as possible. We know in some cases mental health issues are at play and that is why we will cover psychologists under medicare. We as Liberals believe there is need to explore the benefits of Mincome again to see if providing a guaranteed income will create healthier society. How we engage our seniors is sometimes a complex formula so with that in mind we will be good listeners. We know one size does not fit all and will work with advocates to ensure all ideas are being listened to and heard.

Mike Brown

Director of Communications

Manitoba Liberal Party

204.558.1313

media@manitobaliberals.ca