

**What will you do to improve lack of doctors, medical clinics and medical services to the north and other Indigenous populated areas?**

As leader of Ontario's New Democrats, I am committed to continuing Ontario's investment in the First Nations Health Action Plan. In fact, I will double the current investment. This translates to a minimum overall investment of \$209 million per year. Under an NDP government, associated programs will always be First Nations-led, culturally appropriate, and resourced at the levels they need to be.

Our government will also establish province-wide mental health standards, with a timeline for implementation, for the first time in Ontario's history. Through historic investments, we have committed to establishing a standalone Ministry of Mental Health & Addictions. We will also create 2,200 new community mental health care positions, and this will mean First Nations communities will have greater access to support workers and culturally appropriate, community-focused care.

In addition to establishing Ontario's first universal pharmacare program, I am proud to share with you that an NDP government will introduce Dental Care for Everyone. This includes expanding access to services at Community Health Centres, Aboriginal Health Access Centres, and local public health units. We will make targeted capital investments of at least \$25 million to build and expand dental suites as well as purchase and operate mobile dental buses, especially in rural, remote, and Northern communities.

It is also important to mention that our government will support more than 360 new midwives who want to join the profession over the next four years, and this includes First Nations midwives from northern and remote communities who want to bring their expertise to their communities.

**How do you plan on bringing clean drinking water to affected reserves across Ontario? What are the specifics of your plan?**

I believe that the quality of water in First Nations communities is one of the standards by which reconciliation is measured. I understand and appreciate that the chronic crisis of accessing clean water is as varied as the communities that lack this access. In some cases, the lack of safe water stems from a lack of infrastructure, in other cases, it is a result of the lack of resources to safely run the treatment infrastructure in place. In every instance, it is unacceptable.

As New Democrats, we are clear that it is the legacy of colonialism that has led to these deplorable, preventable situations.

That is why the NDP will work in partnership with the many First Nations communities impacted by chronic unsafe water, and we will invest the capital needed to ensure communities have sustainable access to clean water. I will not wait for the federal government to act – but will hold them financially responsible.

While I am aware of recent commitments made at the federal level on water safety for First Nations communities in Ontario, an NDP government will not allow jurisdictional disputes between the federal and provincial governments to stand in the way of action. Instead of arguing with the federal government, our government will act first — in full partnership with First Nations — and argue with the federal government later.

**How do you plan on supporting the unique needs of First Nations learners to achieve their full potential?**

I have committed to ensuring schools receive sufficient infrastructure funding across the board so that there are no regional disparities. In addition to our overall education infrastructure commitment of \$16 billion across the province, an NDP government will continue with Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action 62 to establish mandatory age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools and Treaties, among others, as part of the core curriculum for Kindergarten to Grade 12 students.

New Democrats also recognize the importance of an Indigenous education for all students, on and off-reserve. Our government will work with school boards and First Nations to increase First Nations education activities such as language programs, cultural support programs, and ceremonies. And I am proud that it was New Democrats that supported, through legislation, the establishment of First Nations-led school boards.

**How do you plan on supporting First Nations in resource revenue sharing while ensuring the land is sustainable for future generations?**

New Democrats believe that the province's natural wealth should benefit everyone, and I have committed that the revenues from the royalties on those resources go to First Nations communities. New Democrats believe in resource revenue sharing, and we are committed to its implementation. In an effort to move toward that goal, our government will allocate 100 per cent of provincial mining tax revenue to First Nations.

Furthermore, we have committed to develop a forestry strategy and have renewed our pledge to replace the *Far North Act* in the NDP platform. We will work with northern First Nations to develop an appropriate replacement.

**What economic opportunities do you see that would benefit both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people that does not infringe upon land rights?**

New Democrats are clear in our commitment to meaningful reconciliation and to Treaty obligations, and I believe that our commitment to a forestry strategy, along with our commitment to transfer 100 per cent of provincial mining tax revenue to First Nations communities will help foster respectful relationships between the provincial government, First Nations governments, and resource industries.

Our government will also invest \$1 billion in the development of the Ring of Fire. For New Democrats this means in consultation with the Matawa communities, in whose territories the Ring of Fire is situated, so that these communities receive the clear benefits – in terms of infrastructure investment, jobs, and revenue from the Ring of Fire.

An NDP government will also invest \$1 billion in expanding broadband access to rural and northern Ontario, and we will invest another \$100 million to expand natural gas across Ontario. Further, we will maintain the exemption of First Nations communities from electricity delivery charges. We will also continue to connect remote communities to Ontario's grid, and we've committed to First Nations continuing to have an ownership stake in Hydro One, which is consistent with our vision of public ownership.

It is also important to note that our government will invest \$180 billion into publicly built infrastructure over the next 10 years, making community benefit agreements integral to all of these projects. This will benefit local underrepresented communities, providing hands-on job experience in skilled trades, construction projects, and other professions as well as creating greater opportunities for First Nation community members.

And I am pleased to note that our regional cluster strategy, as well as our investments in film, television, and other cultural industries will also provide future opportunities for First Nations workers, particularly young people.

## **Is the government of Ontario a signatory to any treaties, and what is their responsibility to the treaty relationship?**

Ontario is subject to Treaties between First Nations within Ontario and the Crown. New Democrats are committed to the treaty process, the treaty relationship, and in the continued promotion of Ontarians as treaty people.

New Democrats are also committed to meaningful reconciliation and a true government-to-government relationship with First Nations in the province. I was thrilled to learn that New Democrat MP Romeo Saganash's Bill C-262 passed in the House of Commons – committing Canada to uphold the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In turn, my commitment is that an Ontario NDP government will honour all existing frameworks and accords, and we will partner to renew a political accord between the province and First Nations. Further, we expect to be party, where appropriate, to trilateral tables between governments.

## **How do you plan to improve support, funding and resources for First Nations youth in and from care? Which specific steps will you take to continue the joint commitment on policy, funding and reform in First Nations child and family services in Ontario?**

An NDP government will give children in Ontario's child welfare and youth justice systems the right to contribute to decisions that are being made about their future.

I accept the recommendations for action by internationally recognized Indigenous child welfare advocate Cindy Blackstock, and as New Democrats, we recognize the over-representation of First Nations youth in care. Our government will expand the investigative powers and role of the provincial advocate – with greater disclosure from government and agencies and with greater protection for whistleblowers.

As in other areas, we've committed to honouring all existing frameworks, accords, agreements, and program areas resulting from those agreements. New Democrats are committed to culturally appropriate care of children in need and families in crisis.