



QUESTIONS FOR THE ELECTION OCTOBER 6, 2011

These questions have been developed by members of the Ontario Council Advocacy Committee, covering some of the areas that are of interest to members of Ontario Council for use by members and member clubs at All-Candidates meetings. It is certainly not a comprehensive list, so please add to it as you wish.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Like access to nutritious food, stable affordable housing is a basic need.

“Ontario puts up scaffolding for long-term housing plan”, Michael Shapcott, Wellesley Institute, Nov.29, 2010 www.wellesleyinstitute.com/download/315

While Ontario’s new Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy was introduced in November 2010, there were no monies attached. The Wellesley Institute noted that, other than this fiscal year because of the support from the federal government, Ontario’s contribution to affordable housing had dropped by \$28 million or 14% since 2003.

What will your government do to assist families in finding and keeping stable, safe housing?

CHILD CARE

Council of the Federation, Backgrounder, July 2011
http://www.councilofthefederation.ca/pdfs/Communique_and_Backgrounder_Families_July21.pdf

The Council of the Federation, which includes all the Canadian premiers of the provinces and territories, stated:

“Provinces and territories have been active in promoting early childhood development and have pursued policies that focus on increased parental choice and improvements in the quality of child care.”

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care

<http://www.childcareontario.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Provincial-election-2011-fact-sheet.pdf>

<http://www.childcareontario.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Student-Outreach-Kit-Revised->

[Aug-11.pdf](#)

The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, a non-partisan public awareness and advocacy group whose membership includes education, labour, student and women's groups including CFUW.

Concerns about child care in Ontario:

- Licensed child care in Ontario is **not universal**. In fact 4 out of 5 children in Ontario do not have access to a licensed child care space.
- **Child care relies on parent fees**, which are becoming increasingly expensive, up to \$40-\$60 a day per child
- While the province offers **subsidy funding** to families, the funding is insufficient. Toronto has a waiting list of 20,000.
http://www.toronto.ca/children/pdf/factsheet_jul2011.pdf
- There is a **shortage of qualified early childhood educators**, which is going to become more acute with the increased demand in full-day kindergarten. Many registered early childhood educators (RECE's) are **underpaid and undervalued**. As a result of low wages, 41% of trained early childhood educators are working in other fields. Fair pay and benefits (like pensions) will ensure that RECE's are able to make enough money to support their own families and encourage RECE's who have left the field to return
- **Impact of Ontario's Early Learning Program** on child care
 - 4 and 5 year olds are in school programs, but younger children require more staff to care for them. Without new funding, parent fees will go up and centres may no longer be viable and may have to close.
- **Ontario is falling behind**
 - **Quebec** – In 1997, Quebec chose to implement a high-quality, universal child care system. Parent fees are set at \$7 a day, regardless of family income. Child care workers are employed in good jobs with decent wages, benefits, and a pension.
 - New analysis of Quebec's popular \$7-a-day program. After 12 years, the Quebec scheme more than pays for itself through mothers' annual income and consumption taxes, says Pierre Fortin, an economics professor at the University of Quebec at Montreal. For every dollar Quebec invests, it recoups \$1.05.
<http://spon.ca/quebec%E2%80%99s-child-care-scheme-pays-for-itself-economist/2011/06/22/>
 - **Manitoba** – Following Quebec's lead, Manitoba's provincial funding for universal child care was secured and parent fees are now capped at a maximum of \$18.80 a day and in 2008 began a five-year program to raise child care worker's wages by 20%.

The Child Care Challenge, Laurie Monsebraaten, *Toronto Star*, Feb.11, 2011

<http://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/11/02/ontario-child-care-facing-uncertain-future>

...Ontario's problems are broader than funding, says child-care expert Martha Friendly of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit. ...

“Ontario lacks a coherent system-planning approach to child care,”...

“What are Ontario’s goals and objectives for child care? Is it to help working parents? Reduce poverty? Prepare children for school?” she asked. “We just don’t know.”...

Lack of affordable child care is a barrier to women's full participation in the workforce. Will your party commit to additional funding for high-quality affordable childcare?

There is a shortage of early childhood educators. What will your party do about this? Will your party support fair wages and benefits for ECEs?

What will your party do to assist child care centres who are financially vulnerable due to the Full-Day Learning Program?

CHILD WELFARE

The Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare (<http://www.sustainingchildwelfare.ca/>) is in the third year of its mandate and has released reports recommending changes for the structure and mandate of the province's Children's Aid Societies.

The strategy presented in the report focuses on four basic actions: to reconfigure the organization of children's aid society structures and service delivery; to change the approach to funding child welfare; to implement a new approach to accountability and system management; and to strengthen and improve service delivery.

Would your government support their recommendations? How would you implement them?

HEALTH

Registered Nurses Association of Ontario

<http://creatingvibrantcommunities.ca/>

In order to be healthy, there are conditions that must be in place. Access to conditions that permit health is shaped by the circumstances such as political, economic, social, cultural and environmental conditions and forces.

Circumstances needed for a healthy community include, among others:

- A vision for a poverty-free Ontario
- Affordable and healthy housing
- Early childhood development, childcare, and ongoing education

Health inequities are a direct reflection of social inequalities, which means that chances for better health and a longer life increase along the socio-economic gradient.

HOME CARE

Ontario Home Care Association, 2011 Pre-Budget Consultation

<http://www.homecareontario.ca/public/docs/presentations/2010/Ontario-pre-budget-consultation-submission.pdf>

Over the past five years the number of individuals receiving home care has increased at 1.5 times the rate of funding.

Without funding and strong support, both from the community and from the government, for Community Care Access Centres, the agency tasked with supplying home care services, this will ultimately lead to exhaustion and burn out by the family caregivers and volunteers, and a subsequent increase in hospitalization.

“Four Keys to Better Aging”, Myrtle Greve and Tish Butson, *Hamilton Spectator*, July 2011
<http://www.thespec.com/opinion/article/561007--four-keys-to-better-aging>

What do seniors expect from the health system? ... There are four key areas we believe should be considered:

- **The right care at the right time in the right place:** ...home care services, such as help with personal care, are “capped”. ... Caps on community care services must be lifted so people can be assured of basic home support for those in need.
- **System integration:** We strongly advise that our health care system for older persons needs to be viewed as a whole. There has been collaboration among hospitals, long term care and community services under the direction of the LHIN but more needs to be accomplished. Our reading of the literature leads us to believe that the most is gained when family physicians and primary care are a key part of this integration....
- **Sustainability of the health care system for older persons:** To be cost effective, services need to focus on those older persons who are frail or are becoming frail. ... Change Foundation’s research report also advised redirecting a portion of funds from acute care to community care to help manage care of people with chronic illnesses at home.
- **Recognizing family caregivers:**...acknowledge them and ensure they have assistance in a way they deem most helpful. Examples are increased access to paid respite care, more adult day services, skills training for caregiving, or emotional support and help with problem solving.

How can you help seniors stay in their homes?

What are your party’s plans concerning home care, for both the elderly and those recently released from hospital?

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORK (LHINs)

<http://www.healthydebate.ca/>
<http://www.healthydebate.ca/2011/06/topic/cost-of-care/lhins-2>

LHINs have the mandate to plan, fund and integrate hospital, home and community services. However, like other health regions in Canada they lack responsibility for primary care

services, pharmaceuticals and other complex provincial programs like cancer and transplantation. ...

Unlike other provinces, LHIN's mandate does not include the management of public health offices and agencies. ...

If the LHINs are eliminated, who will administer and manage the health system? ...

LHINs technically have authority over more than \$20 billion in funding to health care organizations such as hospitals and community care access centers. In reality, however, LHIN administrators have little say in how these funds are distributed, and the money itself flows directly from the government to hospitals and other health care providers. In other provinces, health authorities receive money based on the population they serve and have the authority to make decisions on how and where to direct funding. ...

Unlike other provinces, when the LHINs were established, Ontario chose to retain boards for individual hospitals and other local health organizations. ... retaining hospital boards means "LHINs don't have the power to improve services across their regions," depriving them of the ability "to make tough decisions about integrating care.

Other resources:

The Agenda <http://www.yourvote2011.ca/?p=1555>

<http://www.ombudsman.on.ca/Ombudsman/files/31/31d83f5f-d195-48b4-be4c-b2f889268ba5.pdf>

What is your party's position on LHINs? If not LHINs, then what form of coordination would there be?

Who will step in if the LHINs are abolished? Who will administer and manage the quality and performance of the health care system?

Would you consider strengthening the LHIN legislation so that it would include front-line workers, such as doctors?

What strategy would you put in place to reorient our Health Care system to put the community at the centre of the system, where most people live and receive their care?

2014 CANADA HEALTH ACCORD

<http://www.healthydebate.ca/2011/07/topic/cost-of-care/publicprivate>

The Canada Health Act tied federal funding transfers to specific conditions – universality (meaning every Canadian is covered to the same degree), comprehensiveness, accessibility, portability and public administration. The comprehensiveness principle required provincial insurance programs to cover all medically necessary hospital and physician services. But there is no definition for "medically necessary" provided in the Act, and provinces have

interpreted this differently. As the population ages, and the way that health care is delivered changes, there are growing debates about what services should be covered publicly and what services Canadians should be responsible for paying on their own.

What is your party's position on 2014 Canada Health Accord?

MENTAL HEALTH

The recently released Mental Health Strategy is based on the work of an all-party Select Committee and the work of the Minister's Advisory Group on Mental Health and Addictions.

"An eye on mental health and addictions" Bill Tremblay, *Orangeville Banner*, July 4, 2011
<http://www.orangeville.com/news/local/article/1038296--an-eye-on-mental-health-and-addictions>

The province's new strategy for mental health and addictions ignores a key recommendation, according to Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones. ... "Our number one recommendation was that mental health and addictions be dealt with by one overseeing agency," Jones said. "The Liberal government has not adopted that recommendation."

... The strategy targets youth, by providing fast access to high-quality mental health services, early identification and support and assisting vulnerable children with unique needs.... It will spend \$257 million in the next three years to place more mental health workers in schools, colleges and universities and aboriginal communities. ... Educators and social workers will receive training to identify mental health issues. The strategy will see 266 mental health workers and 200 employees in the education sector hired by 2013-2014.

... Barton said the recommendation to create an overseeing body for mental health was not ignored. The provincial government plans to establish a mental health and addiction advisory council that will include input from mental health professionals.

The Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Alliance

<http://www.vote4mha.ca/>

They will be looking to all political parties to make a commitment to mental health and addictions in the coming election. "There is currently an enormous gap between the need for mental health and addictions services and their availability," said Deb Sherman, Executive Director, Ontario Peer Development Initiative. "In the coming election campaign, voters will expect to hear how each party plans to change that."

How would your government implement the recommendations of Mental Health Strategy? Where would you find the funding?

What is your party's position concerning services for mental health and addictions? Who will coordinate this strategy?

POVERTY

Bringing in Women's Voices (<http://www.campaign2000.ca/bringinginwomenvoices/index.html>) is a joint campaign of Campaign 2000 and the Income Security Advocacy Centre . The website has Fact Sheets and suggested actions.

As part of its Poverty Reduction plan, the Ontario government established the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance (<http://www.socialassistancereview.ca/home>), which will be reporting in Dec.2011 with options, and then finally in June 2012.

Will your government be prepared to overhaul the social assistance programs of Ontario if this is recommended by the Review Commission?

Will there be funding available for this?

Will your government support the request of the 25in5 Network for Poverty Reduction to consider a special poverty reduction strategy for those they call the “disproportionally poor” including women, immigrants, people with disabilities, people of racialized groups, and aboriginals? http://25in5.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/25in5_Prebudget_Submission_2011.pdf

WATER

Canadians use more than twice the amount of water per capita than Europeans use.

What initiatives would your government take to encourage conservation of our water resources?

Algal blooms and toxic blue-green algae are becoming an increasing problem on the near shores of our Great Lakes.

How would your government propose to deal with this threat?

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

As a result of Walkerton, the government legislated the Clean Water Act, 2006
<http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment/en/subject/protection/index.htm>

Ontario protects our source water through the Clean Water Act which:

- requires that local communities - through local Source Protection Committees - assess existing and potential threats to their water, and that they set out and implement the actions needed to reduce or eliminate these threats
- empowers communities to take action to prevent threats from becoming significant
- requires public participation on every local source protection plan - the planning process for source protection is open to anyone in the community

- requires that all plans and actions are based on sound science.

Would your government continue to support the work of the Drinking Water Source Protection Committees across the province? Would you widen the protection to include private wells?

GREAT LAKES

Ontario borders on four of the Great Lakes.

How would your government ensure that proposals for intra-basin transfers of water are prohibited, and existing transfers tightly controlled?

WOMEN AND POLITICS

In February 2011, all three elected provincial parties at Queen's Park signed on to Equal Voice's second annual Ontario Challenge pledging to run more female candidates in this year's Ontario election than they did in the 2007 provincial election.

What has your party done to ensure that more women candidates are running in the upcoming election?

WOMEN AND VIOLENCE

The Ontario government released its Sexual Violence Action Plan, *Changing Attitudes, Changing Lives* in March 2011.

The Ontario Coalition for Rape Crisis Centres felt that this was a positive beginning, where sexual violence was identified as a serious issue in the lives of Ontario women, and were pleased to see the initiatives towards sexual violence prevention, training for professionals, service improvements, and increase in funding to all Ontario Sexual Assault Centres.

Is your party committed to supporting and providing funding for the implementation of the four-year plan?

SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS:

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