



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
La santé mentale pour tous



years of
community
ans de
communauté

CMHA questionnaire for federal parties

August 27, 2021

Question 1

The pandemic has taken a devastating toll on the mental health of Canadians and exposed glaring gaps in our mental health care system. If elected, what specific actions will your party take to make meaningful and sustained investments to close these critical gaps and ensure every Canadian has access to quality mental health care in their own community, no matter where they live?

The Green Party is committed to ensuring access to quality mental health care for all Canadians. If elected, a Green government will establish a national mental health and suicide prevention strategy that prioritizes negotiating the Canada Health Accord to expand mental health and rehabilitation services, calling for the inclusion of mental health services as medically necessary, allocating increased direct federal investment in community-based mental health care, and establishing robust accountability mechanisms to ensure the delivery of mental health care on par with physical health. As well, a Green government will support Indigenous-led and culturally safe, mental health programs and services, rooted in Indigenous healing practices, land-based healing and the principle of self-determination. The Greens will also support youth mental health by providing funding for early mental health interventions, including social and emotional learning programs, quality and accessible early childhood education, access to community-based mental health services for parents and caregivers, youth peer support programs, mobile youth mental health clinics, etc. Finally, the Greens will invest in community supportive housing that combines access to affordable units with intensive coordinated services, rental supplements/allowances, case management, counselling, assistance with medication, and life skills training.

Question 2

As many mental health services are often delivered outside of hospitals and physicians' offices, they are not considered medically necessary under the *Canada Health Act* and, as such, are excluded from the federal government's Canada Health Transfer (CHT) to provinces and territories. If elected, what steps would your party take to improve accountability, funding and access to mental health services so that it is treated on par with physical health?

The Green Party's national mental health and suicide prevention strategy calls for the negotiation of the Canada Health Accord to prioritize expansion of mental health and rehabilitation services. It also calls for the inclusion of mental health services as medically necessary. A Green government will additionally allocate increased direct federal investment in community-based mental health, while establishing robust accountability mechanisms to ensure the delivery of mental health care on par with physical health.

Question 3

A crucial social determinant of health is supportive and affordable housing, which ensures that people with mental illnesses and substance use problems have safe places to live as they recover. If elected, what specific investments and additional supports would your party put in place on supportive housing? How would your party ensure that people living with mental health illnesses and substance use problems are able to access affordable housing?

The Greens are committed to investing in the construction and operation of 50,000 supportive housing units over 10 years, and a minimum of 300,000 units of deeply affordable non-market, co-op and non-profit housing over a decade. A Green government will invest in community supportive housing that combines access to affordable units with intensive coordinated services, rental supplements/allowances, case management, counselling, assistance with medication, and life skills training. As well, the Greens will provide expanded mental health services for the homeless community in recognition of the intersections between those experiencing homelessness and those experiencing mental health issues.

Question 4

Indigenous people in Canada have not only been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, they have endured sustained trauma as a result of colonialism, including the legacy of residential schools. If elected, what specific investments will your party introduce to scale up Indigenous-led mental health care to advance Reconciliation and better support Indigenous communities?

The Green Party of Canada is committed to advancing and protecting Indigenous-led mental health care. A Green government will increase investments in Indigenous-led mental health and increase support for Indigenous-led, culturally safe, mental health programs and services, rooted in Indigenous healing practices, land-based healing and the principle of self-determination. The Greens will further ensure that all programming is guided by the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework. As well, the Greens will establish permanent program funding for the delivery of land-based, trauma-informed, community addictions care for Indigenous peoples, and it will increase targeted investment in the mental health workforce serving Indigenous communities. Finally, a Green government will double the current budget of the Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative, it will take active steps to implement Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, specifically those related to mental health, and it will support First Nations, Métis and Inuit in (re)building traditional knowledge systems around healing and wellness.

Question 5

The opioid crisis has worsened over the course of the pandemic and made evident the reality that many people who use substances lack access to the treatment and supports they need to survive and thrive. They often face significant challenges due to stigma, criminalization and structural and racial inequalities. If elected, what specific steps would your party take to comprehensively support people who use substances and what action would your party take to amend federal laws and policies surrounding controlled substances?

The Green Party believes that drug addiction should be treated as a healthcare issue rather than a criminal one. A Green government will first declare the drug poisoning crisis a national public health emergency. It will then move to decriminalize the possession of illicit drugs for personal use, and it will remove criminal penalties for the personal possession and use of all drugs under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. The Greens will additionally create a programme through the federal government so people can access pharmaceutical alternatives of drugs of choice safely. A

Green government will also invest in an integrated system of decriminalization and access to meaningful services for those persons who are seeking treatment, while increasing funding to community-based organizations to test drugs and support those who use drugs. Finally, the Greens will implement a national education and distribution program for Naloxone, so Naloxone kits are widely available to treat overdoses and every Canadian knows what it is and how to use it.

About the Canadian Mental Health Association

Founded in 1918, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is the most established, most extensive community mental health organization in Canada. Through a presence in more than 330 communities across every province and one territory, CMHA provides advocacy, programs and resources that help to prevent mental health problems and illnesses, support recovery and resilience, and enable all Canadians to flourish and thrive. To learn more, please visit www.cmha.ca