

ELECTION PLATFORMS: Targeting older Ontarians

CARP has collected the platform promises targeted at older Ontarians by each of the four main parties. We've taken the liberty of explaining some of the issues presented, but the information is otherwise taken directly from the respective party platforms.

The platform items are organized by issue rather than party to allow for easier comparison issue by issue, starting with healthcare, followed by energy prices and 'other' issues relevant to older voters.

The platforms are the 'official' vision for Ontario of each party, as such, we omitted promises made in the media or the debates and focused instead on concrete proposals.

All the costs and savings associated with party proposals, where they are provided by the parties, are taken from official platforms. We will continue to ask the parties to provide more information as to anticipated costs and/or savings and update this chart when we can. Each of the four main parties promises to eliminate the deficit at the same time, by 2015/16.

The material below represents those items directly relevant to older Canadians. As a result, the respective parties may have stated or elaborated promises not included in the information below and other items of interest not listed below can be found in the full party platforms.

CARP does not support any one party, and the information below is meant only as a neutral guide through the issues that have been targeted toward older Ontarians. Our intent is to give our readers the information they need to make informed decisions on October 6, 2011.

To read each of the party platforms, follow these links:

Liberal Party: http://www.ontarioliberal.ca/OurPlan/pdf/platform_english.pdf

Conservative Party: http://www.ontariopc.com/pdf/Changebook_en.pdf

NDP: <http://ontariondp.com/en/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/NDP-Platform-2011-OUTLINE-small.pdf>

Green Party: http://www.gpo.ca/sites/gpo.ca/files/gpo_platform_2011.pdf

Healthcare

In Ontario, almost half of all program spending is dedicated to healthcare. Each party proposes to maintain health spending, which means the biggest differences between the parties are in allocation of healthcare dollars rather than the total amount being proposed for spending.

Each Party has a comprehensive plan for the overall health system, including cost saving measures, but there is some divergence on the respective central planks on seniors' health. The Liberal Party Platform focuses primarily on supporting homecare, the PCs focus on long-term care, the NDP focus on wait times for acute long-term care, and the Green Party is supporting a spectrum of continuing care.

Party	Proposals	Costs (Where Available)	Savings to Individuals (Where Available)
Liberal	<p>Targeted expansion of house calls to cover more seniors</p> <p>Healthcare co-coordinators to assist up to 25,000 seniors/year after discharge from hospital care</p> <p>Three million additional hours of personal homecare for at need seniors</p> <p>Expand caregiver leave, giving working caregivers up to eight weeks of job-protection to care for family members</p> <p>Active aging strategy, pulling together disparate services for seniors</p> <p>Home retro-fit and accessibility tax-credit for seniors</p>	<p>up to \$60 million/year</p> <p>up to \$50 million/year</p> <p>up to \$60 million/year</p> <p>No Cost</p> <p>up to \$2 million/year</p> <p>up to \$120 million/year</p>	<p>up to \$1500/year</p>
PC	<p>Doubling the non-refundable Caregiver Tax Credit for those who care for an elderly or critically ill family member</p> <p>Create 5000 new long-term care beds and renovate existing beds</p> <p>Strengthen the mandate of the Ontario Health Quality Council to monitor and report on the performance of the healthcare system</p> <p>Set specific, measurable ER wait time guarantees</p>		<p>up to \$420 in taxes saved/year</p>
NDP	<p>Ban Ambulance Fees</p> <p>Eliminate wait for Acute LTC beds</p> <p>Tackle wait for homecare</p> <p>50 new family health care clinics</p> <p>Expanded support for seniors and their families to stay at home</p> <p>Cut ER wait times by half</p> <p>Additional one million hours of homecare</p> <p>Daily homecare supports for seniors, including snow removal, groceries, and meal preparation</p> <p>Forgive student debt for doctors who practice in under serviced areas</p>	<p>\$30 million/year</p> <p>\$110 million/year</p> <p>\$35 million/year</p> <p>up to \$135 million/year</p> <p>up to \$90 million/year</p> <p>up to \$90 million/year</p> <p>up to \$4 million/year</p>	
Green	<p>Ensure that seniors receive the continuum of care they need where they want it by improving home care, transitional care, assisted living and long-term care</p> <p>Create case managers at the family clinic level to proactively coordinate the care seniors need</p> <p>Support all long-term care facilities to provide services in compliance with provincial standards</p>		

ENERGY PRICES

Energy prices have risen steeply over the past several years and as a result, each party has addressed the issue. The Liberal and Green Parties are running on the position that clean energy comes at a cost while the PCs and NDP propose wholesale reductions in the cost of energy through cancellation of the HST and other measures. Voters will have to decide on which side of the energy debate they fall.

Party	Proposals	Costs (Where Available)	Savings to Individuals (Where Available)
Liberal	Continue the new Ontario Clean Energy Benefit through 2015-16		10% off of each energy bill
PC	Remove the HST from home hydro bills and home heating for all Ontarians Remove the Debt Retirement Charge from home hydro bills for all Ontarians Remove mandatory smart meters for all Ontarians Eliminate energy bureaucracy		Approximately \$275/ household
NDP	Remove HST from home energy (natural gas, heating oil, and hydro) Maintain the Liberal Party's Ontario Clean Energy Benefit	\$350 million/year \$200 million/year	\$130-350/year 10% off of each energy bill
Green	Reinstate and expand the home energy savings program		

Other Policies Targeted at Seniors

Party	Proposals	Costs (Where Available)	Savings to Individuals (Where Available)
Liberal	Property tax-increase deferral for qualified seniors	Up to \$20 million/year	
NDP	Creation of voluntary supplementary Ontario Pension Plan		