

Liberal Party Response to NPANS Questionnaire

1. Role Expansion and Promotion - NPs are recognized as being critical to improving public access to quality healthcare, particularly in underserved areas. For example, the majority of healthcare professionals at Virtual Care Nova Scotia are NPs. With their advanced training and ability to deliver comprehensive care, their role can continue to expand to address gaps in the healthcare system. However, as a relatively new contributor to the healthcare system, the NP role is often misunderstood or dismissed.

- a. Will your party commit to policies supporting expanding the NP role across healthcare settings in Nova Scotia?

A Nova Scotia Liberal government will build and expand 40 collaborative clinics across the province to improve upon our current healthcare model. Nurse practitioners are imperative to this model, and their full scope of knowledge and abilities will be greatly beneficial to Nova Scotians' access to quality primary care.

- b. Will your party commit to providing targeted funding to NPANS to support public awareness and promotional campaigns that educate about the important role and benefits of NPs?

Yes, we will provide funding to NPANS to support public education campaigns to ensure that Nova Scotians understand how beneficial NPs are to our public healthcare system.

2. Enhanced Autonomy for Nurse Practitioners - NPs are autonomous practitioners; however, many experience unnecessary red tape and micromanagement by healthcare administrators, preventing them from maximizing their impact on the healthcare system.

- a. How will your party address this issue to ensure NPs can practice fully and autonomously?

We'll work closely with NPANS to ensure that NPs can practice autonomously and contribute their full set of skills to our healthcare system. The team-based approach of collaborative care clinics will recognize NPs as a vital part of our primary care system, which will be a start to improving this issue.

3. Alternative Funding Models - On October 8, 2023, the Minister of Health in Alberta announced a new funding model allowing NPs to direct bill and open their own clinics. NPANS has developed and attached a document outlining the details of this model and highlighting its positive impacts on the Nova Scotia health system.

- a. Will your party consider implementing alternative funding frameworks like those in Alberta to increase access to care for NPs in Nova Scotia?

If elected, we will have conversations with organizations like yours to explore these alternative funding models for the expansion of NPs abilities in Nova Scotia.

4. Retention of Nurse Practitioners in Primary Care - There is a growing trend of NPs leaving primary care. NPANS estimates that 20% of NPs working in primary care have left for other positions in the last year and a half. These positions are not always another role within the health authority.

- a. How does your party plan to address the trend of NPs attrition from primary care roles, ensuring we maintain a robust workforce to serve our communities?

The collaborative care model's team-based approach is effective in improving communication between healthcare workers and supporting a healthy workplace culture. We believe that this model will give NPs the support that they need to thrive, and stay in, primary care. Additionally, we will provide incentives to allied health professionals who agree to work in a collaborative care clinic for 5 years.