



Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador

November 26, 2015

PANL Executive
Paramedic Association of Newfoundland and Labrador
PO BOX 8086
St. John's, NL A1B 3M0

To the PANL Executive:

Thank you kindly for your letter on behalf of the Paramedic Association of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Enclosed are responses outlining the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador's position on the issues you have raised. For more information on our policies, please review our full five-point plan at www.strongertomorrow.ca.

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Ball", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dwight Ball
Leader of the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador



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/nlliberals

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1. What are your parties' thoughts on the best way to deliver pre-hospital care?

The recent review by Pomax Consulting into the Paramedicine / Medical Transport Program within Eastern Health identified a variety of issues that, together, are compromising the ability of the program to meet its mandate and workload. We know this is not a reflection of the professionalism of EMS professionals, but rather, shortcomings in the management of healthcare in our province.

Newfoundland and Labrador currently has the highest per capita healthcare costs, and yet, the worst outcomes. Pomax spoke to the lack of historical performance and geographic response information. We believe that measurement is crucial to management. For too long, this government has considered money going out the door as a measure of success, but it is not. Outcomes are.

Liberals recognize the critical role of pre-hospital care in healthcare system sustainability. Pre-hospital care has the potential to improve patient outcomes drastically. Part of maximizing that potential is recognizing the crucial role EMS professionals do, and could, play in healthcare delivery.

Liberals believe that allowing healthcare professionals to work to their full scope of practice provides a tremendous opportunity to enhance a patient's access to care. Maximizing the skills and training of healthcare professionals and allowing them to work to their full scope of practice will enhance the benefits of their expertise to patients. We must harness the full capacity of healthcare professionals and keep our province in line with emerging best practices across the country.

A New Liberal Government will conduct a thorough review of all legislation and regulations covering health professionals to identify ways to allow healthcare professionals to work to their full scope of practice. Changes resulting from this review will streamline primary care, improve patient care, and build a more efficient system.

We will provide healthy living assessments for seniors aged 70 years and older at no cost to them. Healthy living assessments will be voluntary, in-home, annual assessments conducted by qualified healthcare professionals. These assessments will help keep seniors healthier through preventative measures and education, allowing them to stay in their homes longer while reducing costs on the healthcare system.

In addition to revising scopes of practice, a New Liberal Government will work with the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information to identify new health information systems to improve patient care. We recognize the potential of information technology like Electronic Patient Care Records to create a more efficient paramedicine/ medical transport system within the province.

In our efforts to improve the program, we look forward to working closely with stakeholders like the Paramedic Association of Newfoundland and Labrador.



2. Is your party committed to seeing that all the recommendations outlined in the Fitch Ambulance Report are completed in a timely manner according to the time lines that were set out in the report?

It would seem as though there has been a considerable amount of study on the subject of Emergency Medical Service delivery, but not a lot of action.

In May of this year, the Auditor General released an update on AG recommendations spanning 2009 to 2012, wherein, he indicated that almost half the 2010 recommendations pertaining to the road ambulance program were still not fully implemented.

Not surprisingly, some of the deficiencies identified in the Auditor General's 2010 report reappeared in the 2013 Fitch-Helleur review of the Newfoundland and Labrador Ambulance Program, and again in the Pomax review of the Paramedicine / Medical Transport Program.

Should we form government, we will review and prioritize the recommendations of the Auditor General, Fitch-Helleur and Pomax to determine the best approach for integration.

3. Is your party committed to recognizing the EMS profession as an essential service, where it never has before?

Liberals recognize EMS professionals as vital partners in healthcare delivery. We look forward to sitting down with EMS professionals to further discuss the issue.

4. What is your party's stance on providing compensation for workers who have been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?

As first responders, EMS professionals are continuously exposed to traumatic events. Emotions are often repressed at the scene in order to provide the care people need, but how those emotions are processed after the fact, or not, is critical to one's mental health.

A New Liberal Government is committed to a comprehensive mental health & addictions strategy, which will be developed in consultation with stakeholders like the Paramedic Association of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We believe wholeheartedly that mental health is as important as physical health. In making mental health a true priority, we have a significant mental healthcare deficit to address. Addressing the deficit of care for those experiencing PTSD will be a focus of our strategy.



5. Is your party committed to seeing that EMS personnel are seen and treated as healthcare professionals that are a vital part of the healthcare sector?

We are. EMS personnel are crucial to the system as it works today, as do they hold much promise for a more efficient and patient-centered healthcare system. Liberals are committed to spending smarter, improving healthcare management, and working with stakeholders on the front lines like EMS professionals to create the conditions for healthy communities.

