



Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador

November 26, 2015

Dr. Janine Hubbard and Ms. Lorna Berndt Piercey
Co-Chairs of APNL Advocacy Committee
Association of Psychology in Newfoundland and Labrador
PO Box 26061, RPO
LeMarchant Road
St. John's, NL A1E 0A5

Dear Dr. Hubbard and Ms. Berndt Piercey:

Thank you kindly for your correspondence on behalf of the Association of Psychology in 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 "Dwight Ball".

Dwight Ball
Leader of the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador



1) *What is your party's position on improving access to psychological services?*

Liberals believe wholeheartedly that mental health is as important as physical health. We are committed to developing a comprehensive mental health & addictions strategy, which will be developed in consultation with stakeholders like the Association of Psychology in Newfoundland and Labrador. We know replacing the Waterford Hospital is a must, and under a Liberal Government, it will happen without delay.

As part of our \$14.25 million Innovative Youth Wellness Program, we will establish regional adolescent health clinics that offer preventative care services, sexually transmitted infections testing, treatment for acute health issues, and counselling for physical and mental health in such areas as bullying, sexual orientation, eating disorders, and unhealthy relationships.

We will boost the province's high school curriculum to include a mental health and addictions course tailored to meet the needs of students, and raise awareness about mental health and addictions.

A New Liberal Government will also work in consultation with stakeholders to establish an adult inpatient unit for the treatment of eating disorders.

Improving access to psychological services, and mental health services overall, is central to improving mental health and mental healthcare in the province.

2) *Does your party platform contain anything related to matching the Federal Government's announcement by increasing the amount covered for psychological services from \$325 to at least \$2000 for all provincial employees?*

We recently released our platform, *A Stronger Tomorrow*, which outlines our plans for improving mental health access and outcomes.

As part of our proposed strategy, we have identified the workplace and the K-12 system as two environments allowing for mass prevention and early intervention efforts. Liberals will encourage and support employers around the province to assist employees who are coping with mental health and addictions issues. We will also review psychological services for provincial employees as part of our workplace mental health efforts.

3) *What will your party do to ensure timely access to psychology services for those who need it by investing in telehealth services?*

There is so much untapped potential for telehealth in our province. With the lowest population density amongst provinces, telehealth can help connect people virtually to



psychological services. Telehealth can help overcome geographic challenges in accessing mental health services, improve wait times and reduce travel costs.

Of course, access to telehealth is contingent upon internet access. A New Liberal Government is committed to working with the private sector and community-based organizations to expand broadband throughout the province through the best and most appropriate technology available.

4) Does your party platform contain measures that will ensure ongoing funding and support for the PsyD Program at Memorial University?

Our approach to governing the province is guided by the vision of a stronger tomorrow. Given the intrinsic and extrinsic value of post-secondary education, Liberals regard Memorial University as a vital partner in creating the conditions for people and communities to succeed.

As part of our mental health and addictions strategy, and our labour market analysis, we will examine the supply and demand of mental health professionals, including psychologists, in the province. We will discuss with Memorial University the numbers of mental health professionals graduating each year, including graduates of the PsyD program, and whether the number is sufficient to meet the mental healthcare needs of our province.

5) What is your party's commitment to improving access to psychological services, particularly gaps in Health Psychology such as Diabetes and Bariatric Surgery?

Improving health outcomes in our province starts with embracing a holistic concept of health. It requires a greater recognition of the role psychological, environmental and cultural factors play in one's overall health.

Liberals are committed to engaging people to become informed and active partners in caring for their own health. We recognize how important it is to improve access to psychological services for persons with diabetes and those contemplating or undergoing bariatric surgery, and we look forward to discussing this service gap further.

6) Does your party plan to improve access to psychological services for adolescents and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

We recognize that persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder often experience isolation as well as mental health issues, the latter of which often go undiagnosed or untreated. It is important to acknowledge and understand the complex needs of persons with ASD.



A New Liberal Government will develop a provincial autism strategy, which will interface with our mental health and addictions strategy. Among other things, our strategy will help address the lack of communication between government departments responsible for providing autism-related services. In developing this strategy, we will collaborate with stakeholders like APNL to ensure our approach is a comprehensive one.

As part of our commitment to making mental healthcare a true priority, we will review all relevant mental health legislation to ensure our province is keeping pace with emerging best practices in the fields of mental health and addictions

We will also eliminate the “IQ 70” standard by which autism and intellectual disabilities are measured, and, as part of the Innovative Youth Wellness Program, we will expand Applied Behaviour Analysis past Grade 3.

To promote inclusion in the work force, we will also work with stakeholders to improve supported and supportive employment for persons with disabilities.

7) Will your party commit to meeting National ratio Standards for Educational Psychologists in Newfoundland and Labrador’s Schools?

There is an opportunity to deliver youth mental health services in the K-12 system. Should we form government, we will establish a Premier’s Taskforce on Improving Educational Outcomes, which will inform a Comprehensive Education Action Plan. Part of the work of the taskforce will be reviewing not only the ratio, but also the roles of counsellors versus psychologists and how each role can best compliment the other. Rest assured, a Liberal Government is committed to providing mental health assistance and support to children and schools, and we are committed to working with the Association of Psychology in Newfoundland and Labrador.

