

Improving public health care

NDP **BACKGROUNDER**

Today's families expect quality health care for everyone—not just for those who can afford to buy it. That's why the NDP's Tommy Douglas created public medicare, and that's why New Democrats are working now to secure this vital social program.

Public health care is fairer than the US for-profit system—where a fatter wallet means better care and 45-million Americans have no health coverage at all. It's also more efficient, costing \$2,000 less per person every year. Still, after 25 years of neglect, Canada's public system is showing serious stress fractures of its own.

Wait times are exploding, there's a nursing shortage, and five million Canadians can't find a family doctor. Lacking dignified long-term care spaces, seniors languish in scarce hospital beds. Families like yours will shell out \$4-billion on prescriptions this year—and one in five face ruin if illness strikes because they don't have adequate enough drug coverage. Yet Stephen Harper just shrugs as for-profit clinics proliferate, bleeding more resources from the public system most of us rely on.

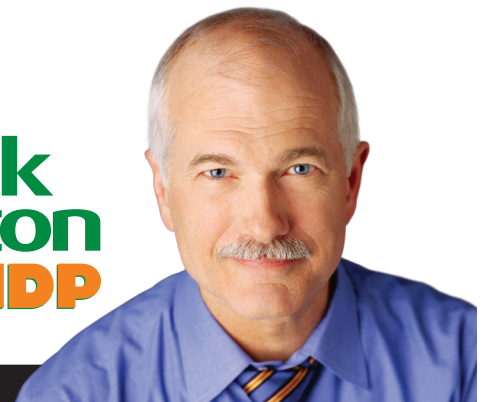
It doesn't have to be this way.

After 25 years of steady erosion, it's time for a Prime Minister who will make your family's health care his top priority. A Prime Minister committed to training more doctors and nurses, cutting wait times, halting creeping privatization and investing in long-term and home care for an aging population.

Jack Layton will be that Prime Minister.

Don't let them tell you it can't be done.

**Jack
Layton**
NDP



Stephen Harper can't be trusted.

- He broke his election promise to implement a “Comprehensive Patient Wait Times Guarantee”—stopping at a handful of small provincial pilot projects that leave most patients out in the cold.
- He provided no concrete leadership that could shorten wait times system-wide—no plan to train more doctors and nurses; and no plan to create long-term care spaces or expand home care coverage.
- Instead of working to control runaway drug costs, he extended brand-name drug companies' monopoly rights by three years—boosting their profits by delaying public access to cheaper generics for even longer.
- He won't stop the creeping US-style privatization of Canadian Medicare—refusing to enforce the Canada Health Act when private clinics for the wealthy bled professionals from the public system.

Stephane Dion is not the change we need.

- By instructing his Liberals to skip key votes, he rubber-stamped Harper's plans to squander \$50-billion on corporate tax cuts instead of investing in priorities such as pharmacare, long-term care, home care, or disease prevention.
- With Dion at the cabinet table, Liberal majority governments destabilized public medicare for a generation by cutting \$25-billion from health and social transfers—and average wait times doubled on their watch. That's not the change we need.

Jack Layton's New Democrats: Putting you and your family first.

This election, Jack Layton and his team of New Democrats will release a plan to modernize public health care and reduce wait times for you and your family. Already, Layton's team has led the way in Parliament:

- Launched a plan to phase in **universal prescription drug coverage** to protect today's families from soaring costs—including measures to reduce drug costs at source, such as national bulk-buying and drug patent reform.
- Pressed Ottawa to work with provinces to **create training spaces for more doctors and nurses**—and tabled the Creating Fair Opportunities Plan to speed up recognition of credentials for tens of thousands of foreign-trained health professionals.
- Exposed and challenged Harper's failure to **stop US-style privatization**—calling for reliable federal funding linked to provincial commitments not to subsidize the expansion of for-profit care.
- Consistently advocated more **long-term care** spaces and expanded **home care** coverage—to offer seniors dignity in their later years and take pressure off scarce hospital beds.
- Led the way on **disease prevention**—including passing a law controlling toxic phthalates; tabling legislation to create a breast implant registry; launching the Children's Health and Nutrition Initiative; calling for funding to replace unsafe water systems; and promoting a comprehensive anti-poverty strategy.