

SENIORS - Media Backgrounder

Protecting pensions

- The UCP has said they will pull Alberta out of the Canada Pension Plan. The NDP will protect pensions by passing legislation preventing any Alberta government from leaving the CPP.

Homecare Expansion

- The Alberta NDP will create an additional 20,000 clients over four years. This will also improve access in rural and remote areas.

Staying healthy at home:

- **Expanding Seniors Home Adaptation and Repair Program (SHARP):** This program was brought in under the previous NDP government to help seniors renovate and adapt their homes. The Alberta NDP will increase the annual income threshold from \$40,000 to \$50,000 for individuals and from \$75,000 to \$90,000 for couples, so more seniors are eligible.
- **Local seniors programming:** Increase Family and Community Support Services (FCCS) by 50 per cent, as FCCS funds many seniors organizations offering services to help seniors stay in their homes (food services, snow shovelling and lawn care, transportation, and more).

Making life more affordable

- **Drivers Medical Exams:** Make seniors' driver medical exams free, reversing the decision by the UCP to make seniors pay between \$85-150 for exams.
- **Drug benefit:** Reverse the UCP decision that ended prescription drug coverage for seniors' spouses and dependents.
- **Vaccine coverage:** Make the shingles vaccine (Shingrix) available free of charge to eligible seniors who want the vaccine, including: every Albertan who receives the Alberta Seniors Benefit; continuing care residents; and home care clients.

Standing up for seniors

- Re-establish the office of the Seniors Advocate, and ensure this position is independent, to advise and advocate for policy solutions on behalf of seniors.

Support for low-income seniors

- **Benefits:** In 2019, the UCP cut benefits to vulnerable Albertans including the Seniors Benefit, Income Supports and AISH payments. The NDP will increase benefits to where they should be if they had kept pace with the cost of living, and then index to inflation going forward.

- Affordable Housing:** As detailed in our strategy, we will build more seniors housing: both independent, self-contained housing and housing in communal settings, such as lodges.

All Amounts Incremental to Budget 2023 (amounts in millions)

Description	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025	2024/ 2025
Seniors' Driver Medical Exam Coverage <i>Operating Expense</i>	3	4	4
Seniors Drug Benefit for Eligible Dependents <i>Operating Expense</i>	10	40	40
Shingles Vaccine Coverage <i>Operating Expense - See Note 1</i>	30	5	5
Increase in Seniors Benefits and Other Income Supports <i>Operating Expense - See Note 2</i>	70	230	240
Increase for Family and Community Support Services <i>Operating Expense</i>	40	80	80
Increase for Homecare <i>Operating Expense</i>	25	25	25
Seniors Home and Adaptation Repair Program <i>Capital Plan</i>	1	2	2

Note 1: The shingles vaccine provides lifetime coverage. We expect significant uptake/cost in fiscal year 2023/2024, with lower costs in future years.

Note 2: The amounts include the full cost to re-index all benefits, including the Seniors' Benefit, Income Supports, AISH and PDD as previously committed.