



Communist Party—Alberta Response to Questions Posed by the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association

1. What is your party's commitment to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Coverage for Seniors Benefit?

The Communist Party-Alberta has a plan for higher royalty payments, progressive taxation and public ownership of valuable resource industries, which will ensure lavish funding to maintain and improve health, education and other essential social services

2. What are your party's plans to improve the access to safe and affordable assisted-living facilities?

We have not explicitly singled out assisted-living facilities, but we have a comprehensive social housing policy to provide safe and affordable housing to everyone. Here is part of the section from our election program:

Quality, Affordable Social Housing – housing is a human right.

- Lower rents and establish meaningful rent control;
- Provide better social support for people with disabilities to remain in their homes;
- Massively expand public, not-for-profit housing;
- Establish a vigorous programme of co-op housing and demand the federal government assume and significantly increase its funding responsibility for social housing;
- Create a provincial land bank for affordable housing;....

3. How would you make ageing in place and/or Home care a more viable solution and option for our senior population?

We are committed to home care as a service provided through the Health Care system by unionized employees either directly through government or non-profit agencies, with no fees charged to users. Eliminating for-profit agencies means better working conditions and better staffing levels, which in turn will mean a more stable work force and better service. Neglecting these services results in worse health outcomes and forces people into more expensive care facilities. We are fully aware that better home care and assistance for aging in place provides better care at lower cost. It's totally win-win.

4. Specify essential programs and identify the funding your party will put in place to support all seniors in Alberta.

We have not particularly singled out seniors, but our program is for enhanced services and support for all Albertans.

5. What are your party's plans to enhance the availability of resources to provide health care for seniors in Alberta? (i.e. geriatricians)

Once again, we have not explicitly adopted a policy about increasing geriatricians, but we have a general policy of improving health care. Here are the health care points from our platform:

- Restore and expand public funding to health care;
- Ban private clinics and two-tier health care, enforcing the Canada Health Act in Alberta;
- Build new, publicly owned, not-for-profit, quality senior's, mental health and long term care facilities;
- Guarantee a full time job offer to every Albertan graduate in Nursing and the allied health professions.
- Stop and reverse all P3 (Public, Private Partnerships) in Alberta health care delivery and the privatizing of public services, i. e. laundry, food, cleaning, within the public health system. Restore employment with dignity to these badly paid workers;
- Establish a publicly owned pharmaceutical manufacturer to work in collaboration with the Alberta university Departments of Pharmacology;
- Expand medicare in Alberta to include dental care, pharmacare, eye care and health promotion;
- Stop the "war on drugs" and treat addiction as a medical problem, not a criminal act.
- Increase support for home care.

6. What is your party's position to ensure that there are appropriate programs (tax and wellness initiatives) in place for seniors so they can continue to maintain an active and affordable lifestyle in retirement?

We have not singled out seniors, but we emphasize preventive health care and support for community facilities for sports, culture and social engagement.

7. What does your party see as the role of the Alberta Office of the Seniors' Advocate?

The office can continue its function of helping connect seniors to services, but the general Communist approach is that social organizations should be their own advocates and should play a more active role in formulating government policies and programs and even in drafting legislation. By guaranteeing adequate long term funding for a wide array of social services and supports, we can free up many existing advocacy groups from fund-raising and lobbying, and allow them instead to become program designers and consultants to professional service providers, tailoring programs to their needs.

8. Does your party have any other policy positions that you feel would be of interest to Alberta seniors?

We advocate full employment policies with environmental responsibility – guaranteeing job-retraining and jobs to all Alberta workers displaced by technological change and by phasing out of oil and gas production. Many of these replacement jobs will be in new sustainable energy technology and infrastructure, and in such things as retro-fitting existing buildings for energy conservation, but there will also be abundant opportunities for jobs in providing services to improve the quality of life for all Albertans.