

Manitoba Health Professional Associations Coalition Questionnaire

Manitoba Liberal Responses

1. What and who do you see as part of the publicly funded health system across Manitoba?

We see anyone who is receiving public funds to provide care or service in our health care system as part of the public system – Hospitals, clinics, EMS, physiotherapy, doctors, nurses, health care professionals, labs and support teams – and at the centre of it all are patients.

There are entirely private clinics that operate entirely outside of the public system.

Manitoba Liberals want to rebuild and strengthen Manitoba’s public health care system, for reasons that are both practical and principled.

The practical reason is that while anyone can get sick, not everyone can pay for it. By having everyone contribute to pooling our collective resources in public health insurance, we make sure everyone is covered. A well-run public system that focus on prevention can provide service with better outcomes at lower cost than comparable private systems.

Ensuring universal coverage for Health Care is not a cost – it is an investment. The public system is the only one that the vast majority of Manitobans will ever be able to afford or use.

We also know from talking with plenty of people in health care that private clinics are profitable because they take the “easy” cases and leave the hard and more costly cases for the public system. As an example, eye clinics may perform simple surgeries without a nurse or even anaesthetic. There are shortages and delays for the hard cases where people urgently need care in the public system, but end up on a waiting list.

Governments have an obligation to serve all of citizens equally, as a matter of rights and human dignity. That is what Manitoba Liberals believe. When it comes to health care, you should get care based on need, not on the fact that you have money.

2. How will you invest in preventative care and coordinating services impacting all the social determinants to optimize health and improve the wellness of all Manitobans?

Our 2023 Health Care Platform makes a major shift towards prevention with an aim to provide a “Health Care Home” for every Manitoban – a family physician or a nurse practitioner.

Around the world, health systems that have more family doctors patients are healthier and are lower cost, because as frontline of local community healthcare, family physicians help keep patients out of crisis – out of ERs, Hospitals, ambulances, and medevacs.

Ensuring every Manitoban has a family physician or nurse practitioner is a key part of the Manitoba Liberal plan to shift the system to preventative care.

We will fund the creation of “health care homes” as clinics and attract family physicians and other team members by having three types of top-ups:

- Flexible pay so that family physicians, nurse practitioners can take more time with patients who need it – seniors, patients with diabetes, expecting mothers.
- A top-up for working in teams, to encourage clinics with wraparound supports. This would mean a clinic with a psychologist or mental health worker, nurse practitioner, pharmacist or lab tech would all be eligible for collaboration pay.
- A rural and northern equity top-up. We know there are challenges attracting people to live and work in rural and northern Manitoba clinics, so we will offer bonuses to encourage long-term settlement in the community, and shift away from reliance on locum and agency placements.

To address long-term chronic shortages in rural and northern Manitoba, Manitoba Liberal government will also ensure that Manitoba has the capacity to educate and retain homegrown talent.

- We have committed to funding the creation of a new Brandon Campus of the University of Manitoba medical school, dedicated to rural and northern family medicine. This campus will focus on training Manitobans from rural and northern Manitoba who want to return to their home communities to practice family medicine and other rural and northern medical care.

3. How will you involve health professionals in decision making for changes that impact the health system, and which professionals would you involve?

In order to rebuild trust in a severely damaged system, we want and need to set up an ongoing collaborative exchange between health professionals and policy makers.

First, we want our ideas and policies to work. We want to be able to evaluate whether proposed new ideas and innovations will be effective, and if they do, how we can work with health professionals to best implement them.

We will also implement suggestions that would improve care or reduce spending that is wasted on non-health costs, like administration, travel, or delays.

After seven years of PC cuts and decades of hallway medicine under previous NDP governments, Manitoba Liberals believe that it is past time to restore stability to our health system.

Health professionals have the frontline experience and play a key role in providing strategic advice to the future of healthcare in Manitoba. A Manitoba Liberal Government will always strive to ensure proper consultation and partnership with relevant health professionals for any changes that impact the health system.

4. What is the action plan for the continued movement of professions into the Regulated Health Professions Act?

One major problem in recent years is the slow pace of moving organizations under the Regulated Health Professions Act. This was caused by the small number of dedicated staff in the department who have been working on this file.

This process has taken a very long time, and successive NDP and PC governments have been quick to blame the organizations instead of taking direct responsibility and tackling this issue head-on. Seventeen health professions have been trying to get under the act, including school psychologists and massage therapists. We recognize that greater regulation of health professions is important for professionals in terms of a clear, consistent rules surrounding the governance of their discipline, but also for everyday Manitobans.

A Manitoba Liberal Government will provide greater staffing resources within the Department of Health to identify, support, and eventually transition organizations looking to become registered under the Regulated Health Professions Act.