

Policy Questions

What do you believe are the main concerns of gender and sexually diverse people in Ontario? What specific actions will take to improve the lives and wellbeing of gender and sexually diverse communities?

Our plan for more fairness in Ontario will benefit everyone. However, we do recognize that specific actions are necessary to protect gender- and sexually-diverse communities.

Gender-based violence is far too widespread in our society and has a devastating impact on survivors, their families and the community. This is unacceptable. Everyone deserves to feel safe in their communities, workplaces, homes and schools. Ontario has made significant progress toward ending gender-based violence; however, there is still more work to do.

It's Never Okay: Ontario's Gender-Based Violence Strategy is an up to \$242-million framework that updates our Domestic Violence Action Plan and commits our province to a process of innovation and renewal that can better respond to a higher demand for services and support for survivors of and/or those at risk of experiencing gender-based violence.

Through the Strategy, our government is reaffirming our commitment to end all forms of violence against anyone based on their gender, gender expression and/or gender identity.

Gender-based violence can happen to anyone, but evidence tells us that women and children are most at risk, in particular; Indigenous persons, racialized and newcomer women, members of the LGBTQI2S community, and women with disabilities.

Through the #MeToo movement, we've seen that awareness is now higher than ever, perspectives are changing, and more people are coming forward for support.

The strategy will continue to ensure that Ontario is a safe space where we all live free of violence.

Many gender and sexually diverse youth haven't seen themselves reflected in the curriculum. Where do you stand on the current elementary and secondary health and physical curriculum, and how will you ensure that youth get the information they need?

We are fully in favour of the curriculum as it stands now.

In an age of Facebook, Snapchat and social media, we need to ensure our students have the information they need to make informed choices about their health.

The previous Health and Physical Education curriculum was dangerously out of date – over 15 years old. Think about that, over 15 years ago there was no Snapchat, there was no Twitter and Facebook was just coming online. Our students needed protection, so we updated the curriculum to provide them with accurate information at an early age.

Our government consulted with parents, students, and health experts prior to updating the curriculum, including psychologists, mental health experts and health scientist.

At a time where more and more students are active online, we cannot afford to turn back the clock when it comes to student safety, consent and well-being. And we need to recognize the modern, progressive society we live in and make sure our children are open and accepting of all others.

Trans and gender diverse people lack quality, accessible healthcare in Ontario. In what ways do you think the Government can better support access to medical services and specialists for trans patients in the province? In what ways will you bolster access to trans-inclusive healthcare?

Trans and gender diverse people are protected under the Human Rights Code, and this includes when they are accessing health care. Ontario has come a long way over the years, but we know that more needs to be done.

We are promoting policies in clinics and other health centres that provide everyone with not only the care they need, but the environment they need. I know that Toronto is leading the way in this regard, but we need to mirror that success in other places in the province.

I will continue to advocate on behalf of the trans and gender diverse community when it comes to their health care.

The gender and sexually diverse community are disproportionately affected by mental health and addictions due to various social and economic factors. What steps will you take to improve the overall mental health and wellness of our community?

Our government is making an unprecedented investment in mental health and addictions, with an investment of \$2.1 billion to deliver more accessible and better integrated care.

In 2018-19, more than 12,000 more young people will be able to access community-based services such as therapy and counselling, a number that will grow to about 46,000 by 2021-22.

Every secondary school in Ontario will have access to an additional mental health worker, with about 400 new positions being added within two years. We're also creating at least 15 additional youth wellness hubs over four years to improve access to services for youth aged 12 to 25

Up to 350,000 more people with mild to moderate anxiety or depression across the province will have access to publicly funded structured psychotherapy, in places like their doctor's offices or a community organization and 2,475 more supportive housing units over four years.

Access to withdrawal management for young people and adults living with addictions will be expanded and support for more programs and services that are culturally appropriate.

There will be an additional \$570 million of funding over the next four years so that young people can access the supports they need.

Gender and sexually diverse people are less likely to be hired or secure stable employment, and experience wage disparity in comparison to their cisgender (non-trans) and heterosexual peers. What initiatives do you believe the Government can develop or support in order to reduce the rate of unemployment and underemployment in the gender and sexually diverse community?

The Pay Transparency Act that was recently passed by the Ontario government included a provision that will force companies with 100 or more employees to report the salaries of not only women, but also employees with other diversity characteristics. This will be further defined through consultations that will begin later this year. I encourage you to be a part of that consultation process. This kind of legislation will shine a light on the biases in the hiring process. Since these reports will be made public, the actions of businesses will be available for everyone to see.

Over the past four years, one of our government's priorities has been making our workplaces fairer. This included the end of pay secrecy, a higher minimum wage, equal pay for equal work and paid sick days. If re-elected, we will continue to focus on fairness in the workplace, addressing those who are underemployed through better skills training and making sure that everyone is paid a fair and decent wage.

What will you do to help end the one-year MSM ("men who have sex with men") blood ban?

This is the responsibility of Health Canada and falls under federal jurisdiction. However, I personally support removing the ban. Not only does it affect our blood supply, but it also unfairly stigmatizes people.

What will you do to help end the criminalization of people living with HIV/AIDS in Ontario?

Unfortunately, the stigma attached to people living with HIV/AIDS remains in our society. This is shocking, given the knowledge we now have about HIV/AIDS and how it is transmitted.

Our government knows that working with the affected communities is the best way forward on an issue such as this. As your MPP, I will continue to be a strong voice on this issue, and will push for greater fairness and acceptance. I'm confident that the stigma that has been around for far too long will soon be a thing of the past.

The principles of Truth and Reconciliation are important to addressing the impact of colonialism on Two-Spirit/gender and sexually diverse Indigenous peoples. What does your plan for Truth and Reconciliation look like? Will you fully implement the 94 Calls to Action, and how will you address the impacts of colonialism?

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) final report shone a light on Canada's residential school system, a dark chapter in our history with lasting impacts still felt by Indigenous people today. Ontario is working with Indigenous partners to address the legacy of residential schools, close gaps and remove barriers, create a culturally relevant and responsive justice system, support Indigenous culture, and reconcile relationships with Indigenous peoples. True reconciliation goes beyond the TRC's 'Calls to Action'. The Province will continue to look to Indigenous partners for guidance and leadership.

Ontario is investing more than \$250 million over three years on programs and actions focused on reconciliation, which will be developed and evaluated in close partnership with our Indigenous partners.

Understanding the Legacy of Residential Schools

New Funding: Up to \$20 million over three years, including up to \$1.4 million in 2016-17 to support the revitalization of the Mohawk Institute Residential School.

- Work with Indigenous partners to establish a commemorative monument in Toronto -- dedicated to residential school survivors -- as a site of learning, healing and reconciliation.
- Support restoration of the Mohawk Institute Residential School and work with Indigenous partners to develop an interpretation centre.
- Identify death records of "lost children" who attended residential schools and contribute to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation archives, locate burial sites and repatriate remains when requested and/or provide memorial ceremonies and markers.
- Work to waive fees for Indigenous people seeking to reclaim traditional names, and honour Indigenous traditions by accommodating the use of single names.

- Address systemic racism and discrimination directed against Indigenous peoples through an Indigenous-Informed Anti-Racism Strategy.

Closing Gaps and Removing Barriers

New Funding: Up to \$150 million over three years in life promotion support and new mental health and addictions supports.

- Establish up to six new or expanded Indigenous Mental Health & Addictions Treatment and Healing Centres.
- Help stop the cycle of intergenerational trauma by investing in mental health and wellness programs.
- Increase the number of licensed child care spaces and culturally relevant programming off-reserve.
- Expand child and family programs on-reserve and, through Indigenous and federal partners, make supports available in more communities.
- Through recreation-based programming, work with remote high-need Indigenous communities to identify community priorities for children, youth and families.
- Support culturally based suicide prevention strategies for children and youth, and provide crisis intervention, as needed.
- Explore reclassifying First Nations/federally operated schools to enhance collaboration between the provincially funded education system and First Nation schools.
- Develop an action plan for responding to social emergencies in Northern First Nation communities.

Creating a Culturally Relevant and Responsive Justice System

New Funding: Up to \$45 million over three years in Gladue expansion.

- Create more victim services programs for Indigenous peoples.
- Establish an Indigenous Language Courts pilot project to help break down language barriers and increase access to justice.
- Increase funding to Community Justice Programs that focus on healing and cultural restoration.
- Develop culturally appropriate programs, including community supervision, to provide support to Indigenous people accused of crime.
- Host a Gladue summit to identify service gaps in the justice system.
- Increase the number of Gladue report writers and Gladue aftercare workers.

- Enhance healing services and cultural supports for Indigenous inmates in custody and offenders under community supervision.

Supporting Indigenous Cultural Revitalization

New Funding: Up to \$30 million over three years.

- Develop an Indigenous Cultural Revitalization Fund that would support cultural activities and programming in Indigenous communities, including on-reserve and in urban centres.
- Host an Indigenous languages symposium with Indigenous partners to review current programs, and to identify community priorities and supports needed for Indigenous languages.
- Support youth cultural camps in Indigenous communities.
- Create a traditional medicine garden on government-owned property in Toronto.

Reconciling Relationships with Indigenous Peoples

New Funding: Up to \$5 million over three years.

- Lead by example and take active steps to apply a model of reconciliation on a daily basis.
- We changed the name of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.
- Reflect the term 'Indigenous' in government ministries and programs, where appropriate.
- Discourage the use of names that are considered offensive to Indigenous people in organizations funded by the government.
- Engage with Indigenous partners on approaches to enhance participation in the resource sector by improving the way resource benefits are shared.
- Work with the federal government to address the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Organizations working with or for the gender and sexually diverse community struggle to gain or maintain long-term, sustainable funding. How will you support organizations, specifically ones that provide important health and social services and ones that work in arts, culture, and heritage?

One thing that you can count on is my commitment to fight for equality and justice, and I will fight for sustainable funding for organizations that support and encourage the gender and sexually diverse community.

As the MPP for Barrie, I've tried to be a strong advocate for organizations providing important services to the community. If re-elected, I will keep fighting for things our community needs, the health care everyone deserves, and the cultural initiatives that make Barrie-Innisfil the amazing place it is.

How do you intend on increasing support to HIV/AIDS organizations in Ontario?

Strong advocacy is what is needed to do this. As the MPP for Barrie, my advocacy has resulted in three new units at Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre, as well as increased GO train service.

When it comes to increasing the support for HIV/AIDS organization, this kind of advocacy is needed. The people of Barrie-Innisfil can count on me to bring their concerns to the Premier and Cabinet, and to fight for the funding and support that people in our community need.

What steps will you take to end invasive, medically unnecessary operations on intersex children?

As a teacher who has spent her life educating and supporting our young people, their protection is critically important to me. Our government is committed to the protection of children and to ensuring our health care system takes care of them. We do not support any surgery or medical procedure that is not in the best interests of children.

The rights of sex workers are important to the gender and sexually diverse community, with our community being well represented within the workforce. What will you do to help end the criminalization of sex work in Ontario, ensuring full labour rights and protections?

Everyone needs to be protected while at work. This includes sex workers. The debate around the decriminalization of sex work in Ontario needs to be focused on how best to ensure their rights are protected, and to make sure workers are safe.

Gender and sexually diverse youth are overrepresented in the homeless youth population. What specific steps would you take to address the gender and sexually diverse youth homelessness crisis in Ontario?

Ontario is providing up to \$1.5 million over three years for a mental health support crisis services centre in downtown Toronto for LGBTQ2S youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

The drop-in centre, run by Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, provides an array of mental health and other services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and two-spirited (LGBTQ2S) young people. These services include crisis intervention, mental health and addictions counselling, referrals to housing, and other community supports and culturally sensitive services for Indigenous youth.

The investment will help deliver on Ontario's priority to target youth homelessness, as well as its plan to end chronic homelessness in 10 years. LGBTQ2S youth experience far higher rates of homelessness than other young people.

The government's Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness reported that LGBTQ2S youth often avoid seeking help from services for homeless people because of concerns about homophobia and transphobia. This means that government needs to do more to ensure youth are not avoiding services due to these fears. We also need to work with organizations providing these services to encourage them to address these needs, as well.

Many gender and sexually diverse people are concerned about moving into retirement communities, care facilities, or having at home care out of fear of having to “go back into the closet” or because they fear they won’t receive sensitive, informed care. How will you ensure long-term care will competently accommodate and work with the gender and sexually diverse community? What steps will you take to improve long term care for our community?

Every Ontarian deserves to grow old with dignity in a safe, secure and compassionate environment - that is why we continue to make critical investments in this sector. We also want to make sure that our long-term care facilities are culturally sensitive, and that they are safe spaces for everyone.

We've opened over 10,000 new LTC beds and redeveloped 13,500 LTC beds since 2003, including 900 redeveloped and new beds since Jan 1, 2015.

And we announced that we will be opening 5,000 new LTC beds over the next four years as well as providing 15 million more hours of nursing and personal support annually for residents in LTC homes.

In our 2018 Budget, we're investing \$300 million over three years to increase staffing in long-term care homes. This is part of our commitment to increasing the hours of care each resident receives to an average of 4 hours per day. And will ensure that every home in the province has staff with specialized training in behavioural supports for residents with cognitive impairments.

This means an additional 15 million hours of nursing, personal support and therapeutic care for our loved ones living in long-term care. This is part of our 10-year plan to create more than 30,000 new beds, working with the long-term care sector.

We know that there is a lot of work that still needs to be done, so we're committed to continuing to increase investments and boost supports for home and community care/

Party Questions

Does your party have any openly gender diverse and/or sexually diverse candidates? If comfortable answering: How many, and in what ridings? Also, what concrete steps will your party take to increase representation of gender and sexually diverse people among candidates?

We have a number of candidates who identify as LGBTQ2S. Premier Kathleen Wynne is the most identifiable candidate. The Liberal Party has worked hard to create a party and a political environment that is open and welcoming to everyone.

Does your party have policies and practices that are affirming of gender and sexually diverse people? If so, what are they? If no, will you commit to adding them?

The Ontario Liberal Party is strongly committed to diversity and welcomes people from visible minority group members, women, Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities, members of sexual minority groups, and others who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas.

Have your staff and volunteers been through training on gender and sexually diverse topics and issues? If yes, please explain. If no, will you commit to participating in training on an ongoing basis?

As members of the Ontario Public Service, my staff have had this training, plus training in workplace harassment.

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