



August 8, 2023

Honourable Mark McLane
Minister of Health and Wellness
4th Floor Shaw North
PO Box 2000
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7N8

Dear Minister McLane,

I am pleased to have you serve as the **Minister of Health and Wellness**.

On April 3, 2023, we were given a mandate by Islanders to continue to work towards building a brighter, bolder, and better future for our province. We made a commitment to work with Islanders, and for Islanders – and that motto should be the basis of how you conduct yourself in your actions as Minister. We must engage Islanders, have real conversations, and put the interest of Islanders at the heart of every decision we make as a government.

Over the last four years we have proven to Islanders that we can navigate many challenges. We must continue to show courage, strength and above all else, leadership when it comes to the challenges we are faced with. Change is sometimes difficult, but with your proven ability to stand up and meet challenges head-on, I'm confident that you will make the best decisions to move our province forward.

Our government has always led with positivity and has served with humility and kindness. I expect this to continue in our second mandate. We have shifted the political landscape in PEI to be more collaborative in nature. I have always said, it doesn't matter where good ideas come from – if it's a good idea, and it improves the lives of Islanders – we should consider it. I want you to have regular communication with your legislative colleagues on all sides of the Legislature to provide opportunities for input and feedback.

As Minister, you and your leadership team will play a critical role in contributing to the commitments we have made to Islanders. You are responsible for the conduct of the department you oversee and must be aware and adhere to the values of the public service in your interactions with the Islanders and the public service. Most importantly, you have Cabinet Colleagues that serve alongside of you; whenever and wherever possible, you should work collaboratively with them to break down silos and reduce barriers to accessing services by working together across Departments.

As Minister of Health and Wellness, you will:

- Add Physician Assistants and Nurse Practitioners to provide care to patients throughout our health system;
- Introduce Care Providers and Patient Advocates to support patients in waiting rooms at Emergency Departments;
- Make applications like Maple and other virtual care apps free for all Islanders;
- Establishing a multi-disciplined task force to create an action plan to expedite offload delays for ambulances at hospitals;
- Provide free tuition for Resident Care Workers, Licensed Practical Nurses, Primary Care Paramedics and Advanced Care paramedics in exchange for two years of service on Prince Edward Island;
- Add four new full-time ambulances, 7 days a week to the roads to reduce response times and launch recruitment incentives for hard-to-recruit paramedic positions across the province;
- Provide up to \$20,000 in additional annual funding to fire departments that offer Medical First Responder services;
- Provide funding to organizations such as Pat and the Elephant, Transportation West, and others to do the non-urgent transfer of medically stable patient transfers;
- Accelerate the roll-out of Medical Homes by adding 16 more Patient Medical Homes across the province by the end of 2024;
- Add 100 new full-time positions to support existing and future medical homes;
- Incentivize newly created Patient Medical Homes to take unaffiliated patients off the Patient Registry with a goal of having all Island patients affiliated with Medical Homes in the next 24 months;
- Launch Nurse Practitioner-led walk-in clinics across the province;
- Expand Primary Care Access Clinics (PCAC's) to provide care for unaffiliated patients by increasing capacity at existing clinics in Charlottetown and Summerside while opening new clinics in West Prince and Kings County;
- Establish Mobile Primary Care Clinics that can provide care in any community across the province based on need;
- Create a Primary Caregiver Grant of up to \$1,500 a month to support families who choose to keep their loved ones at home longer instead of entering community care;
- Establish a Care-in-Place program;
- Add 50 new positions over the next two years to public home care;
- Provide rebates up to \$500 per year for Home-Based Medical Alert Systems;
- Develop a plan to increase residency seats on Prince Edward Island over the next four years;
- Launch an Associate Physician license to allow foreign-trained physicians expedited licensing to practice to a defined scope under the supervision of other fully licensed physicians;
- Introduce the necessary measures to have domestic and foreign recognition of credentials for healthcare workers faster;
- Introduce a 'Job Guarantee' program for students studying in health care fields;
- Introduce a Health Bursary for students studying to become LPNs, RNs, and Paramedics that pursue studies off Island in exchange for a return-in-service agreement to work on PEI;

- Provide free licenses to healthcare professionals who have left the workforce to return to work on a casual or part-time basis;
- Expand tools like Skip the Waiting Room to reduce missed appointments and give patients the ability to book their own appointments;
- Work with community partners to establish Access Clinic Exam Spaces for local pharmacists, physicians, nurse practitioners, and locum physicians to provide walk-in clinics for non-urgent, routine matters;
- Develop and support a Chronic Pain Management Strategy and Chronic Pain Management Clinic;
- Implement a Virtual Hallway program to connect family physicians with specialists for consults to avoid unnecessary referrals to specialists;
- Work with the PEI Speech and Hearing Association to reduce waitlists and service gaps by developing an action plan to add new Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists in the public health system;
- Work with the PEI Physiotherapy Association and PEI Chiropractic Association to expand their scope of practice;
- Modernize the medical fee structure so it is flexible enough to cover innovative arrangements for family physicians who want to provide access to primary care through walk-in clinics outside their existing practices;
- Establish a Partners-in-Care program through the Home Care Program where aging Islanders are connected to telehealth services with Pharmacists, Nurse Practitioners, and Physicians;
- Increase monthly comfort allowance for residents in care;
- Expand restorative care services to improve the quality of life for Islanders in recovery;
- Provide access to free contraceptive care;
- Work with allied health providers to expand the scope of practice to order diagnostic imaging;
- Create a pilot project to provide publicly funded pelvic health therapy to Islanders;
- Develop a recruitment and retention strategy for high vacancy positions, including lab technology, social work, psychology and therapists, by working with post-secondary partners in the region;
- Respecting collective agreements, establish a fund to foster recruitment and retention specific to community care and long-term care facilities;
- Continue to work with the Long-term Care Associations to decrease the wage gap between public and private providers and to develop a long-term human resource strategy for community care and long-term care facilities;
- Introduce additional resources, such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists and other allied health providers, into community care and long-term facilities to improve the quality of life for residents;
- Make legislative amendments to ensure that public and private community care facilities and long-term care facilities move toward common standards, including uniform inspections so that Islanders are safe and receive appropriate care and support;
- Expand the use of electronic medical records to manors and nursing homes;
- Working with the Alliance for Mental Wellbeing, provide \$250,000 to facilitate frontline workers — such as social workers, healthcare professionals, correctional workers, police officers and anyone who works with vulnerable Islanders — to take the Brain Story Certification training to better understand the connection between brain development to addiction and mental health;

- Working with stakeholders and the Chief Public Health Office, open an overdose prevention site in Charlottetown and enhance harm reduction services available for vulnerable Islanders;
- Reduce barriers to accessing continuous glucose monitoring devices and other necessary supplies for those Islanders who are diabetic;
- Reduce the co-pay for the generic drug program to \$5;
- Continue to work with the Federal Government to expand the Prescription Care program by adding more drugs to the formulary and reducing costs to accessing prescriptions;
- Work collaboratively with other Atlantic provinces to use vacant operating room times across the region to reduce surgery backlogs;
- Launch a comprehensive Medical Transportation Assistance Program to provide Islanders who have to travel out of province for medical treatment, tests or operations with financial assistance to cover accommodations and per diems for meals, in addition to existing programs to cover gas, bridge or ferry tolls;
- Increase our regional licensing system to include other healthcare professionals, similar to what the Atlantic provinces have done with the Atlantic Physician Registry;
- Provide the Autism Society of PEI with funding to establish a dedicated resource to provide mental health support to its members and their families;
- Expand the 'Eye See Eye Learn' Program to provide children with two free eye exams and two free pairs of eyeglasses between birth and age 12;
- Cover all licensing costs to support a temporary, part-time, or full-time return to work for healthcare practitioners who have previously left the system; and
- Reach long-term agreements with off-Island providers of specialized health services.

While you accomplish your work, I ask that you assess the impacts of each policy decision by using evidence-based tools and frameworks to ensure we always consider the impacts on climate, gender, diversity, and vulnerable individuals before implementing a decision.

As we progress through our mandate, we will work together to identify further refinement and priorities of focus. We must be nimble as a government and be able to adapt to the realities of what Islanders are facing each and every day. To do this, I ask that you have regular outreach with key stakeholders connected to your department and the work that your department does. Along with the leadership in your department, I ask that you regularly communicate with stakeholders and community organizations.

I look forward to working with you to improve the lives of all Islanders.

Sincerely,



Hon. Dennis King
Premier of Prince Edward Island

CC. Lisa Thibeau, Deputy Minister – Department of Health and Wellness