

Liberal Party of Canada

Canadian Organization for Rare Disorders

1. A rare disease is a disease that affects fewer than 1 in 2,000 persons. People with rare diseases face a lot of barriers trying to get good healthcare. If elected, would you support Canadians with rare diseases having access to the same quality of healthcare as those with common disorders?

2. Canada is the only developed country without legislation to support development of treatment of rare disorders. In 2010, an orphan drug regulatory framework was drafted. If elected, would you support implementing regulations and laws to promote research and development of new treatments for people with rare disorders?

3. Most developed countries have national plans for rare disorders that include Centres of Reference, guidelines for diagnosis and treatment, and support for patient groups. Canada has national plans for cancer, diabetes, heart disease and mental illness. If elected, would you support a national plan for rare disorders, including a national office of rare disorders?

Combined response.

As a first critical step towards a rare disease strategy, the previous Liberal government included a commitment to accelerate access to breakthrough drugs for rare disease and disorders as part of the National Pharmaceutical Strategy (NPS) in the 2004 Health Accord. The NPS was promptly cancelled by the Harper government in 2006, and no work has been done since. If elected, a Liberal government will reintroduce this initiative, and will engage in extensive consultations with stakeholders in the biotechnology, health and science sectors, to determine the best path forward on this important issue.

A Liberal government will also work with the provinces and territories to ensure that all Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast have a drug plan that covers the cost of prescription drugs for illnesses that can be financially catastrophic to families.

Liberal governments brought in universal medicare and passed the *Canada Health Act*. A new Liberal government will bring a robust, renewed commitment. For Liberals, as for most Canadians, universal access to quality, timely care regardless of your ability to pay, and regardless of which province you live in, is part of what defines Canada. A new Liberal government would make a strong commitment to the future of Canada's healthcare system by committing to maintain the 6% annual increase in health care transfer beyond 2014.