

Seniors – Your Votes Count!

April 15, 2018

Care Watch asked all parties competing for our votes in the Ontario Election on June 7, 2018 to specify what they are prepared to do to ensure that seniors can age safely in their own homes and communities. CW's focus is community support services, and we advocate: *a 3% annual increase to bring funding into line with funding to institutions; an additional 2% annual increase so these services can grow province-wide; and annual adjustments for inflation.*

Below is a summary of the response received from the **GREEN PARTY OF ONTARIO**

GREEN PARTY OF ONTARIO RESPONSE	Care Watch Comment
"We believe that all people should have the opportunity to age safely in their own homes and receive quality care".	A good start...
"The Green Party will increase funding for home and community care". ...	CW advocated a specific level of funding increases for community support services. The GP response is vague and does not address the issue. Like other parties, it also does not identify the source of proposed funding.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "This means developing and funding research into smart home technologies"; and 	The GP appears to suggest that the answer to ensuring that seniors can age safely at home is "smart technology". Technology is not the only answer to ensuring safe ageing at home; it is a supplementary tool, but not a programme. There are already many technologies that are used by seniors, such as fall alert systems, but if there is no one to monitor them and respond, they are not useful.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Implementing more meaningful community programs to help seniors remain active citizens". 	It is unclear what the GP means by "meaningful community programs" and helping "seniors remain active citizens". The Party's response is vague, suggestive of occupational therapy and recreation programming.
Investments are also needed to improve the availability of assisted living and transitional living for seniors who need more support.	CW would support investments to increase the availability of assisted living and transitional living opportunities, but the response is not sufficiently specific to inspire confidence. Additionally, with more support in their own homes, many elderly Ontarians could delay use such resources.
"The Ontario Personal Support Worker Association [OPSWA] should immediately be designated as the self-governing regulatory body of personal support workers". This will "...increase accountability" and "...ensure reasonable working conditions and compensation" for PSWs.	CW disagrees. It would, in fact, be a conflict of interest for the OPSWA to perform this function. The OPSWA is essentially a "guild" (an association established for mutual aid and to advance common self-interests and goals), much like the other professional associations (e.g., OMA; RNAO; OHA). Self-regulatory bodies do not automatically protect the public interest. Also, as nurses have discovered, professional regulation does not ensure either reasonable working conditions or reasonable compensation.
"Increasing the wages of personal support workers is also important".	CW agrees that PSWs working in the community should be paid a living wage and at the same rates as those working in institutions. However, the commitment is vague.
"Increases in health care funding should be allocated to frontline service rather than administration to ensure that people receive quality care when they need it".	CW agrees that new investments should be directed to frontline services rather than corporate profits . The GP response does not address the issue raised respecting non-for-profit delivery of services.