

Campaign Central

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STATEMENT BY LIBERAL LEADER VINCE MACLEAN
PREVENTION - A HEALTH PLAN FOR NOVA SCOTIANS

CAPE BRETON NOVA LIBERAL HEADQUARTERS
WHITNEY PIER - SYDNEY

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1988

Check Against Delivery

Statement from Liberal Leader Vince MacLean

In Nova Scotia today, our health care system does a good job of treating Nova Scotians when they are sick. But we do very little to help keep Nova Scotians healthy. The Liberal government intends to change that.

Over the long term, prevention of disease and senseless accidents is the key to reducing the health care costs that we, as well as our children and grandchildren will face.

The vast majority of our hospital beds are occupied by people suffering from life-style related diseases, or traumatic accidents. Six of the 10 major causes of death in Canada are tied to alcohol, smoking or both.

A comprehensive program of disease and accident prevention has many components. The cost of these programs is minimal, but the benefits will be felt for generations.

The Liberal government will embark on a major public education campaign, designed to tell Nova Scotians how to live healthier lives.

Proper nutrition will be emphasized, and the provincial government will fund at least one full-time nutritionist in every county.

A major thrust of our government's campaign will be directed toward school-aged children. The benefits of proper nutrition, regular exercise, moderation in drinking and abstention from smoking cannot be over-emphasized.

For some Nova Scotians it is unfortunately too late to learn a healthy lifestyle. Our children must not miss this essential part of their education.

Poverty, a growing problem in Nova Scotia, is a proven enemy of good health. Medical science has concluded that under-nourished children cannot learn, and therefore have virtually no chance to achieve their true potential.

It is the responsibility of the government of Nova Scotia to ensure that every child receives proper nutrition. We will tie the food allowance of families on provincial and municipal social assistance to the cost of a nutritional food basket, as estimated regularly by Agriculture Canada. No family will receive less than is required to purchase sufficient nutritional food. Our county nutritionists will help families determine their nutritional needs.

Treatment for substance abuse:

The immoderate use and abuse of alcohol is taking a terrible toll on our society. Automobile accidents, industrial accidents, absenteeism, lost productivity, family break-up, child and spousal abuse, chronic health problems, crime and a myriad of other social and health problems are caused and aggravated by a growing alcohol problem.

Alcohol and drug abuse are health problems not unlike other diseases. They are treatable, and the patient can lead a normal, productive life.

The tragedy of this health problem is that so many victims go untreated.

Nova Scotia needs more and better facilities to fight this problem. Many facilities are physically substandard, resulting in a reluctance on the part of many sufferers to be admitted. Drug dependent women and young Nova Scotians, in particular, have expressed anxiety about undergoing treatment in these facilities.

The Liberal government will upgrade and expand facilities for treatment of substance abuse and chemical dependence.

A separate facility to treat women and young chemically dependent Nova Scotians will be developed.

Prevention will also be emphasized. Our government will encourage employer participation in a program to identify and help those who are in trouble.

Services for the mentally ill and emotionally disturbed Nova Scotians are insufficient, particularly outside urban centres.

The Liberal government will increase community-based mental health services across Nova Scotia, by providing additional clinics and trained staff in all regions. A comprehensive model for this program will be developed in consultation with the case workers who deal with the mentally ill.

Few Nova Scotians realize that the cost of unwanted, usually teenage pregnancies in this province is estimated by Planned Parenthood at \$70 million per year. Young, single mothers are prime candidates for long-term dependence on social assistance.

The cost in terms of family disruption cannot be estimated. We must, and our government will, ensure that young Nova Scotians learn how to prevent unwanted pregnancies. This will be done in both media and public school education campaigns.

To bring better services to rural Nova Scotian families, the Liberal government will embark on a pilot project health outreach program. Mobile health units will be designed for service in rural areas, to provide specialized services in dentistry and in gynecology.

As we move toward the 1990's and the next century, it is essential that the government of Nova Scotia show the foresight to control health costs over the long term.

The only way to achieve this goal is to reduce the demand for health services. Our program of prevention, combined with home care, Co-operative Care and other initiatives will vastly reduce demand on our hospitals and nursing homes.

Our goals, a healthy Nova Scotia, and a long-term reduction in ever-increasing health costs, will be achieved.

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BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS

AN ECONOMIC PLAN FOR NOVA SCOTIA

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