

## FEDERAL ELECTION 2019

# NEEDED: A MADE-IN-CANADA SOLUTION TO DELIVER DENTAL CARE FOR ALL

### THE PROBLEM

- Across Canada every year an estimated 6 million Canadians don't see a dentist because they can't afford it.
- Too many people in our communities are experiencing dental pain and suffering because they can't afford basic dental care.
- You can't work or look for a job if you've got a dental abscess or missing front teeth.
- You can't be truly healthy if you have diseased teeth and gums.
- But Medicare doesn't cover the cost of care for our teeth and gums.

In this 2019 election we call on all federal parties to commit to help fill the gap in access to dental care experienced by 1 in every 5 Canadians.

Parties with a platform commitment to deliver dental care for all will emerge as leaders in building the 21<sup>st</sup> century public healthcare system we need.

### THE COSTS

#### For our healthcare system



Many people turn in desperation to doctors' offices and hospital emergency rooms – but they can't get dental treatment there. This costs

us all. For example, in Ontario it **costs over \$38 million annually** in avoidable healthcare visits for dental problems that should be treated by a dentist.

#### For people's health

**1 in 5 Canadians cannot afford dental care.** Bad oral health makes chronic diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular disease and respiratory disease even more severe. The most common surgery on young children at most pediatric hospitals is for tooth decay.



#### For productivity



Every year an estimated **2.26 million school days** for children and **4.15 million work days** for adults are lost due to dental visits or dental sick days.

#### For the future

About **1 in every 3 Canadians does not have dental insurance.** This number will grow as baby boomers become seniors, and more people work in the gig economy without dental benefits. The affordability of dental care is a growing concern for low and middle-income Canadians



Each province and territory has some limited public dental program for specific groups of people: low income children; people on welfare; and in some cases, low income seniors. There are no public dental programs in Canada for low income adults. Some provinces are exploring how to expand public dental programs to fill the gaps.

## WHAT WE WANT THE NEXT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO DO

- It's not fair that only people who can afford private dental care can have healthy teeth and gums
- We need to ensure that all Canadians can get the dental care they need to be pain free, healthy and well.
- The federal government must recognize access to dental care as a health issue. Step up to help fill the gap experienced by 1 in 5 Canadians who cannot afford private dental care.
- Commit to invest at least \$600 million annually to support provinces/territories to expand their public dental programs for people who are not covered by private dental plans and cannot afford dental care.
- Allocate funding to the provinces/territories on a per capita basis for programs that reflect these principles:
  - Equity – target people in need without dental insurance to ensure that everyone has access to prevention, treatment and emergency dental care, either through an employer, private plan or the public dental plan.
  - Cost-effectiveness – program delivery through a mixed model of private and public dental clinics.
  - Accessibility – expanded capacity for Community Health Centres and public health dental clinics/dental buses to ensure low income and marginalized people truly get the care they need with supports such as transportation, interpretation and links to health and social services.
- Make a specific commitment to address the extremely high rates of dental decay experienced by Indigenous people. Tackle the geographic, language and socio-cultural barriers to care.



### ELECTION 2019: ASK CANDIDATES:

**Have you ever experienced dental pain? What would you do if you were 1 of the 6 million Canadians who can't afford to see a dentist for treatment?**

**What steps will your party take to help get people out of dental pain and ensure dental care for all?**



Canadian Association of Public Health Dentistry  
Association canadienne de la santé dentaire publique

L'Association canadienne des  
centres de santé communautaire



Canadian Association  
of Community Health Centres