

# 2020 Provincial Election Primary Care Report Card



BC COLLEGE OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS  
*The home of family medicine*

# Election platform report card indicators

As the voice for family medicine in British Columbia, the British Columbia College of Family Physicians (BCCFP) advocates to government to support a strong health care system. This 2020 provincial election report card provides voters in British Columbia with an evaluation of the policy platforms of the major provincial parties as they relate to health care.

Our assessment is focused on the following four key indicators.

## Every British Columbian has access to a well-supported family doctor

Evidence shows that comprehensive, longitudinal care from a family doctor leads to better health outcomes, increased patient satisfaction, and lower overall cost to the health care system. The BCCFP believes everyone in British Columbia deserves access to a family doctor. We urge the government to take meaningful steps to ensure access to comprehensive, longitudinal, relationship-based primary care for all British Columbians, including the 700,000 citizens who do not yet have a family doctor. We expect to see expansion and improvement of the Patient's Medical Home and team-based care models.

## Indigenous health and cultural safety

The BCCFP urges government to embed changes in the health care system that address the physical and mental health disparities of Indigenous people that are the result of systemic racism. This process must be done under Indigenous leadership using Indigenous principles.

## Addressing the overdose crisis

119 British Columbians are killed by an overdose every month[1]. The government needs to take an enhanced role in fostering mental wellness and reducing the harms of alcohol and other drugs for individuals in all stages of life. The BCCFP would like to see the government improve overdose prevention services and initiatives and adopt innovative approaches to the crisis, such as the decriminalization of illicit drugs.

## Pandemic readiness and response

The COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be an urgent health care priority for months, if not years. The pandemic has highlighted disparities in the health circumstances faced by priority populations, such as those in long-term care facilities, Indigenous peoples, Black communities, marginalized folk, as well as people experiencing adverse social determinants of health such as homelessness and poverty. The pandemic has also contributed to a decline in mental health and well-being.

We must not return to the status quo of the pre-pandemic health care system. The BCCFP expects to see the government invest in mental health support, expansion of virtual care as standard feature of family practice, and PPE availability. Virtual care should be used to enhance comprehensive, longitudinal, relationship-based care – not as a substitute. This period should be used as an opportunity to increase support for family medicine in order to improve the foundational health of all British Columbians.

[1] <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/birth-adoption-death-marriage-and-divorce/deaths/coroners-service/statistical/illicit-drug.pdf>

# Election platform evaluations

We evaluated the publicly available platforms of the BC Green Party, BC Liberal Party and BC New Democratic Party (NDP) against our four key indicators. Each party is rated on a five-point scale for each indicator, with five being the highest score:

- 5 – strong leadership demonstrated and we encourage an ongoing commitment
- 4 – some progress and involvement but greater action and leadership is needed
- 3 – high-level commitment but implementation details are lacking
- 2 – little commitment or involvement but has acknowledged this area
- 1 – no indication of intention to take action, or the planned action is detrimental to this area

**While an overall rating is provided for each party, we recommend reviewing the evaluations for each individual indicator. The indicators have not been weighted, as we know reader opinions may differ as to the importance of each indicator. This report does not represent an endorsement of any one party.**

## Rating score for each provincial party platform

	BC Green Party	BC Liberal Party	BC NDP
A supported family doctor for every British Columbian	8/10	6/10	7.5/10
Indigenous health and cultural safety	8/10	6/10	9/10
Addressing the overdose crisis	10/10	6/10	10/10
Pandemic readiness and response	2/10	6/10	7/10

*An earlier version of this report included a total sum of the ratings for each party in the above table. This has been removed to avoid any interpretation of endorsement of one party overall.*



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## Green Party

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### Every British Columbian has access to a well-supported family doctor

#### Ensuring every British Columbian has access to a family doctor

**Rating: 4/5**

The BC Greens emphasize the importance of tackling the family doctor shortage in BC. The Greens pledge to work with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia to create a pathway for qualified foreign-trained physicians to practice in BC as well as consult with physicians and other stakeholders to improve efficiency, reduce administration, and incentivize becoming a family doctor. They plan to continue the roll-out of primary care networks in BC to expand accessibility of healthcare services, while increasing the number of British Columbians with a family doctor.

#### Standardizing and improving of the Patient's Medical Home (PMH) and team-based care models in BC

**Rating: 4/5**

In the last government, the BC Greens actively advocated for the creation of primary care networks. In their current platform, the Greens highlighted that primary care networks will need ongoing support in order to be successful and are a key component for British Columbians to get access to comprehensive health care. Greater clarity is useful on how they intend to support completion of their goal.

**Overall indicator rating: 8/10**

### Indigenous health and cultural safety

#### Address the physical and mental health disparities of Indigenous people due to systemic racism

**Rating: 3/5**

The BC Greens stated they will review procedures for wellness checks in consultation with Indigenous and Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) organizations, advocates and health professionals, with a goal to expand the use of integrated mental health crisis teams for mental wellness checks. More information is needed on how they will address physical health disparities.

#### Consult Indigenous leadership using Indigenous principles when embedding changes to the health care system to address physical and mental health disparities of Indigenous people

**Rating: 5/5**

The BC Greens noted they will continue to advance cultural competency training for existing healthcare practitioners and support the training of new Indigenous doctors while prioritizing opportunities to expand public healthcare services within communities, as led by Indigenous leadership.

**Overall indicator rating: 8/10**

## Addressing the overdose crisis

### Improve overdose prevention services and initiatives

#### Rating: 5/5

The BC Greens outlined several initiatives to address the overdose crisis and scale up safe supply beyond its current level. They plan to encourage physicians and pharmacists to participate in existing programs and actively consult with people at risk of overdose to create and fund low barrier and accessible programs.

### Adopt innovative approaches to the crisis, such as decriminalization of illicit drugs

#### Rating: 5/5

The BC Greens emphasized they are strongly pursuing decriminalization of simple possession of drugs with the federal government. They are working to de-prioritize policing of simple possession through implementing the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry's recommended amendments to the Police Act. The Greens stressed that providing access to a safe supply through family physicians and other health practitioners helps people at risk of overdose connect with health care professionals and reduce the risk of overdose death.

**Overall indicator rating: 10/10**

## Pandemic readiness and response

### Invest in PPE availability, mental health supports, and expansion of virtual care as standard feature of family practice

#### Rating: 1/5

No specific policy was provided by the party or available publicly online.

### Create opportunities to increase support for family medicine in order to improve the foundational health of all British Columbians

#### Rating: 1/5

No specific policy was provided by the party or available publicly online.

**Overall indicator rating: 2**

**Green Party  
total rating across  
all indicators:  
28/40**



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## Liberal Party

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**Every British Columbian has access to a well-supported family doctor**

**Ensuring every British Columbian has access to a family doctor**

**Rating: 3/5**

The BC Liberals pledge to deliver a total of \$30.9 billion infrastructure investment over three years, which includes transportation, hospitals, primary care clinics, seniors' care homes, mental health treatment and affordable housing. The party has stated improved access to medical care by encouraging practice networks and innovative practice models. The party is working in partnership with the Province of Alberta to improve access to care for British Columbians whose nearest local health services are in Alberta. Greater clarity on how these steps will attach BC residents to a family doctor is needed.

**Standardizing and improving of the Patient's Medical Home (PMH) and team-based care models in BC**

**Rating: 3/5**

The BC Liberals plan to improve patient care by establishing more primary care networks and community health centres in BC. However, no specifics have been made available on how these primary care networks will be established.

**Overall indicator rating: 6/10**

**Indigenous health and cultural safety**

**Address the physical and mental health disparities of Indigenous people due to systemic racism**

**Rating: 3/5**

The BC Liberals plan to achieve reconciliation and new opportunities for Indigenous peoples and have stated commitment to addressing issues of economic and social inequality faced by Indigenous peoples. However, more information is needed on how the BC Liberals will address the physical and mental health disparities of Indigenous people due to systemic racism specifically.

**Consult Indigenous leadership using Indigenous principles when embedding changes to the health care system to address physical and mental health disparities of Indigenous people**

**Rating: 3/5**

The BC Liberals committed to working with the First Nations Health Authority to improve health and wellness for Indigenous peoples across BC, and to eliminate systemic racism from the health care system. While the Liberals are committed to consulting Indigenous leadership to enhance health and wellness for Indigenous peoples in BC, there is no defined framework to specifically address physical and mental health disparities of Indigenous people.

**Overall indicator rating: 6/10**

## Addressing the overdose crisis

### Improve overdose prevention services and initiatives

#### Rating: 3/5

The BC Liberals plan to increase addiction-treatment and recovery programs and ensure those who need help recovering from addiction have a clear pathway to treatment. However, greater clarity is needed.

### Adopt innovative approaches to the crisis, such as decriminalization of illicit drugs

#### Rating: 3/5

The BC Liberals announced they will end the funding discrimination that continues to disqualify abstinence-based treatment programs. They plan to introduce a Safe Care Act to safely and ethically help young people with addictions into treatment, and implement a provincial prescription to prevent addiction, with earlier referrals to specialist care and treatment options. While Liberals have adopted some innovative approaches, their party platform provides no details on decriminalization of illicit drugs.

**Overall indicator rating: 6/10**

## Pandemic readiness and response

### Invest in PPE availability, mental health supports, and expansion of virtual care as standard feature of family practice

#### Rating: 3/5

The BC Liberals plan to accelerate the adoption of virtual medical consultations with doctors to

reduce COVID-19 backlogs and reduce wait-times for referrals. However, their platform lacks details on investing in PPE and mental health supports for family practices in BC.

### Create opportunities to increase support for family medicine in order to improve the foundational health of all British Columbians

#### Rating: 3/5

The BC Liberals stated they will utilize lessons learned from the pandemic to train the health work force of the future, including family doctors, nurse practitioners, and other allied primary health care workers as needed. Greater specifics are needed.

**Overall indicator rating: 6/10**

**Liberal Party  
total rating across all  
indicators:  
24/40**

## New Democratic Party (NDP)

### Every British Columbian has access to a well-supported family doctor

#### Ensuring every British Columbian has access to a family doctor

**Rating: 3.5/5**

The BC NDP launched their primary care strategy in 2018, with a focus on team-based care with government funding and recruiting more health professionals. The party is focusing on opening urgent primary care centres; these are helpful in addressing episodic access to care but do not address the need for comprehensive, longitudinal, team-based primary care. The BC NDPs pledge to ensure that people in rural, remote and Indigenous communities have better access to e-health and telehealth services. We seek more clarity on whether these services will be privatized and how they will improve longitudinal attachment to family doctors.

#### Standardizing and improving of the Patient's Medical Home (PMH) and team-based care models in BC

**Rating: 4/5**

The BC NDPs support the PMH model and plan to deliver more personalized and coordinated care through expanded primary care networks. The BC NDPs want to bring these vital health care networks to more BC communities. The primary care networks will need to be well resourced in order to ensure universal access to comprehensive, longitudinal care.

**Overall indicator rating: 7.5/10**

### Indigenous health and cultural safety

#### Address the physical and mental health disparities of Indigenous people due to systemic racism

**Rating: 5/5**

The BC NDPs plan to work with BC's new Human Rights Commissioner and other stakeholders to bring forward legislation to help reduce systemic discrimination in sectors like policing, health care and education. They also plan to conduct a full review of anti-racism laws in other jurisdictions and launch a full stakeholder consultation leading to a new Anti-Racism Act that better serves everyone in BC. They are rolling out a new rural collaborative framework, guided by the principles of cultural safety and humility.

#### Consult Indigenous leadership using Indigenous principles when embedding changes to the health care system to address physical and mental health disparities of Indigenous people

**Rating: 4/5**

The government consulted with Indigenous leaders and stakeholders in developing *A Pathway to Hope*, their 10-year plan for mental health and addictions. The BC NDPs commit to partnering with Indigenous peoples and will utilize the 2019 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act for more meaningful shared decision making, with Indigenous leadership where possible. Greater clarity would be useful.

**Overall indicator rating: 9/10**



## Addressing the overdose crisis

### Improve overdose prevention services and initiatives

#### Rating: 5/5

The current government has committed over \$600 million in new money to address the overdose crisis. The BC NDPs commit to scaling up BC's response to the opioid crisis across the full continuum of care: prevention, harm reduction, safe prescription medications, treatment, and recovery. The NDPs pledge to develop an initial mental health approach that focuses on addressing problems early for youth; and establish successful Foundry youth centres in more communities and dedicated mental health teams in school districts. The NDPs plan to expand access to counselling by investing in new e-health and other technologies. They also intend to bring mental health care to more people in all regions of BC and reduce counselling costs for individuals in rural and remote communities, in particular. They commit to including the voices of those with lived experience in their policy making.

### Adopt innovative approaches to the crisis, such as decriminalization of illicit drugs

#### Rating: 5/5

The BC NDPs intend to work with the federal government to decriminalize simple possession of small amounts of illicit drugs for personal use, or develop a made-in-BC solution. They also pledge to explore new ways to help prescribers separate more people from the toxic drug supply through safe prescription alternatives. The BC NDPs plan to build new treatment, recovery, detox and after-care facilities across the province, including in communities with an expressed need, and step up oversight of

recovery homes and other private treatment providers to ensure quality care, accountability, and value for money.

**Overall rating indicator: 10/10**

## Pandemic readiness and response

### Invest in PPE availability, mental health supports, and expansion of virtual care as standard feature of family practice

#### Rating: 4/5

To BC NDPs emphasize that their \$1.6 billion preparedness plan will deliver 7,000 new front-line health care workers in long-term care and assisted living; 2 million doses of flu vaccines; and a new Hospital at Home program to ensure patients can get safe care while in the comfort of their homes, taking pressure off hospitals.

### Create opportunities to increase support for family medicine in order to improve the foundational health of all British Columbians

#### Rating: 3

The BC NDP acknowledged that family doctors have not been sufficiently supported in the health care system. They believe primary care networks and the PMH will create better access to family doctors. More detail on how these models will support family doctors is needed.

**Overall indicator rating: 7/10**

**NDP  
total rating across all  
indicators:  
33.5/40**

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