

Heidi Bernhardt
Director of Education and Advocacy
Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada (CADDAC)
heidi.bernhardt@caddac.ca

May 14, 2022

RE: Questions Families Impacted by ADHD Need Answered Preceding the Election

Dear Heidi,

Thank you for sending the Ontario Greens your questionnaire. We appreciate the opportunity to speak on the issues that matter to families in Ontario that are impacted by ADHD. I am happy to provide you with a response on behalf of the party.

Sincerely,
Madeleine Crist
Office Manager
Green Party of Ontario

ADHD in Mental Health

Questions:

- 1. Would you commit to ensuring that ADHD is recognized within Ontario mental health, included in government working groups, and approved for mental health funding?**

Yes. It is important that all mental health issues faced by Ontarians are recognized equally. We would include mental health care under OHIP by increasing the mental health budget to 10% of the healthcare budget, including for ADHD treatment and support. We will also ensure the updated formula includes adequate funding for specific supports to provide equitable access to learning and school activities for all students.

- 2. Would you commit to increased training in ADHD for family physicians and professionals working in mental health, to reduce misdiagnosis, and wait times for assessment and treatment?**

Yes. Ontario Greens would fully integrate mental health services into expanded Family Health Teams and walk-in clinics. We would ensure GPs include mental health as part of regular check-ups and are properly trained in ADHD.

3. Would you commit to ensuring that all appropriate treatments covered for other mental health disorders are also covered for ADHD, including caregiver and patient training?

Necessary assessments and treatments for people struggling with ADHD should be available as part of our publicly funded healthcare system. We support a more holistic approach to health and well-being that is inclusive of both physical and mental health.

ADHD in Education

Questions:

1. Would you commit to improving the current Ministry of Education Special Education System by implementing the recommended Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) education standards?

We recognize that the education system in Ontario needs to be modernized. Ontario Greens are committed to removing and preventing accessibility barriers in K-12 education. Ontario's education system should be improved so it can serve students with any kind of disability, and not be limited to student's recognized through an "exceptionality".

2. Would you commit to ensuring that students with ADHD have the same guarantees to special education resources and supports for their disability as do students with neurodevelopmental disorders such as Autism and learning disabilities?

Everyone deserves equal access to education. It is unfair that children with ADHD face barriers getting the support that they need to learn. If a child's learning is impaired, they should have the right to tools and support that will help them reach their full potential.

We will ensure that all provincial special education systems officially acknowledge and make explicit the challenges faced by students with ADHD, as well as recognize these students as exceptional learners so that their needs are properly accommodated.

We will conduct an independent, external review of Ontario's special education system to assess the current model. We need to make sure that children with ADHD have access to the same kinds of resources that exist for students with other learning disabilities. This will likely require more thorough and diverse special education programs and training for educators.

We would also allocate funds to ensure schools are able to meet the deadline to comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

3. Would you commit to ensuring that educators in Ontario are trained in recognizing ADHD impairments, understanding how ADHD impairs learning, and implementing appropriate teaching strategies and accommodations for students with ADHD?

We need to ensure that ADHD is understood in schools as a barrier to learning rather than a behavioural problem.

We support implementing new training programs for teachers on ADHD impairments to help them better understand their students' challenges. We also support increased materials at both local school boards and the Ministry of Education to better inform educators on ADHD learners.

ADHD in the Workplace

Questions:

- 1. Since the OHRC recognizes ADHD as a disability, would you commit to ensuring that employers are made aware that they must accommodate for ADHD impairments?**

Yes. It is important to ensure that employers are aware that disabilities, including ADHD, need to be accommodated in the workplace in the same way that any other disability would be. We plan to update, improve, and implement the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act as quickly as possible,

- 2. Would you commit to ensuring that funding for both employee and employer training on ADHD and appropriate workplace accommodations is made available?**

We would work quickly to implement as much of the AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) by 2025. We would also update Accessibility standards to make Ontario accessible to people with disabilities. We would substantially improve the accessibility of the Ontario Public Service's workplaces, services, and facilities, and substantially strengthen AODA enforcement. To help businesses understand how to accommodate people with disabilities, we will provide clear, in-depth guidelines and deliver more responsive, comprehensive support for AODA implementation to organisations through free, independent advice.

- 3. Would you commit to reviewing the possibility of screening for adult ADHD in provincial employment training programs?**

We believe necessary assessments and treatments for people struggling with ADHD should be available where required and would work with mental health experts and those with lived experience to ensure provincial employment training programs meet the needs of those with disabilities, including those with ADHD.