



## **Positive Pathways/HIV Ontario Sector Advocacy Issues with Response from Candidates.**

Thank you for visiting this page. Our sector has identified multiple key issues and provided some key questions as it pertains to work within our sector to 14 candidates in four ridings beginning on May 3<sup>rd</sup> via email and a follow up email on May 30<sup>th</sup>. Two ridings at that time did not have candidates that we could find, one for the Liberal Party in Chatham-Kent – Leamington and the other for the Green Party in Essex. Where possible we tagged the 14 candidates on Facebook/Instagram. Posts were also made to Twitter and LinkedIn. Out of the 14 Candidates we want to acknowledge those that did respond. We want to also acknowledge that no response may not be an indicator of the candidates interest in the issues we presented, but that a variety of issues may have resulted in a “non-response”

The issues and the following responses below:

1. Delivering an anti-racist and anti-stigma HIV/AIDS response;
2. Diagnosis and retention in care;
3. Medication access and province-wide universal pharmacare
4. Addressing the drug policy, poisoning, and overdose crisis
5. Insufficient and Stagnated ODSP Rates and Supports

**Kind Regards,**  
**Michael Brennan**  
**Executive Director**  
**Positive Pathways Community Services**

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### **1. Windsor – Tecumseh Riding**



**Candidate: Gary Kaschak**

“Good Evening Michael

We've spoken before in my role as the Windsor City Councillor for Ward 8. If you've followed me and my City Hall track record, you'll know that I support these issues.

We again approved the Consumption & Treatment site at the new location at Goyeau & Wyandotte streets tonight at our City Council Meeting by the way.

Hoping for your support.

Thanks

Gary Kaschak  
Liberal Candidate for MPP Windsor - Tecumseh Riding”



“Thank you, Michael. The Party's response to come will be considered the authoritative one. Please follow up with me if you are not provided with a response. Andrew”

Follow up provided May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022

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## 2. Windsor West - Riding



### “Key Election Issues Impacting Ontario’s HIV Response:

#### 1. Delivering an anti-racist and anti-stigma HIV/AIDS response;

We’ll establish a systematic review of the reality that Black Canadians are disproportionately impacted by HIV/AIDS, mental health issues, heart disease, hypertension, Sickle Cell, and stroke. We’ll pass the Ontario NDP’s Improve Access to Health Care Act to improve care for Sickle Cell patients in crisis.

We’ll remove the cost of medications required to treat and prevent HIV by making PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) free.

We will also ensure more meaningful involvement of people living with HIV in government decisions impacting the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in line with the principle of “nothing about us without us.

#### 2. Diagnosis and retention in care;

Hospitals have been underfunded for decades and stretched even thinner by COVID-19. The Liberals froze hospital budgets and caused hallway medicine. The Ford Conservatives refused to shore up hospitals during the pandemic. The Ontario NDP has a plan to strengthen hospitals. We’ll make the investments needed to fix the hallway medicine crisis and address longstanding capacity and staffing issues.

We will ensure needed hospital projects and expansions in Windsor-Essex and Kitchener get shovels in the ground without sacrificing needed health services in surrounding communities. We will raise hospital funding to exceed health sector inflation, population growth, expanded operating plans, and unique local needs such as aging populations.

### 3. Medication access and province-wide universal pharmacare

More than two million Ontarians have no prescription drug coverage. Too many Ontarians must choose between filling their prescriptions or paying the bills. When people can't afford to take their medications, it hurts people and strains our health care system. The Ontario NDP will act immediately to accelerate pharmacare, ensuring all Ontarians have prescription drug coverage faster. Andrea Horwath will lead the way, driving hard to achieve a national program. We'll begin working immediately on Universal Pharmacare for Ontarians. Pharmacare will complement Ontario's existing public drug programs, so that no one loses their current coverage. Lead creation of a national, universal pharmacare program: Andrea Horwath will be the premier who leads the way on a comprehensive national pharmacare plan. An NDP government will work with Ottawa to establish a national formulary and as premier, Andrea Horwath will use Ontario's seat at the Council of the Federation to help build a national plan – not block it from happening.

### 4. Addressing the drug policy, poisoning, and overdose crisis

We'll declare the opioid crisis a public health emergency, and invest in addiction rehabilitation, detox centres, and harm reduction strategies. We'll remove the cap Doug Ford placed on supervised consumption sites, expedite approvals for supervised consumption sites in the north, and work to ensure safer alternatives to the current toxic and deadly supply of drugs available on the street. We will also work with the federal government to reduce the stigma of drug addiction and decriminalize personal drug use, so people can get the medical help they need. Chiefs of Police have joined the call for stronger action, including decriminalization.

[Just this week](#), Andrea Horwath committed to addressing this like a crisis, saying: "Too many parents have had to bury their child because of a toxic overdose. It's heartbreaking and horrifying how the opioid epidemic is taking precious lives, and tearing families apart. The enormity of the opioid and overdose epidemic is a call to action," said Horwath.

### 5. Insufficient and Stagnated ODSP Rates and Supports

New Democrats know that we have to do better to provide dignity and meaningful support through social assistance. We can't undo almost three decades of underfunding all at once – but we have a plan to get there.

We're going to ensure our most vulnerable are treated with respect and dignity by doubling current ODSP and OW rates within 2 years. We will establish a system that raises people out of poverty no later than the end of our first term. We'll immediately begin to work with all stakeholders on delivering an evidence-based approach to setting rates at a level that recognizes the real costs of essentials like food and rent."



**Candidate: Linda McCurdy**

"Dear Michael,

Thank you very much for your request and for your important work in the community.

The Ontario Liberals recognize that the HIV response of the Ford government has been abysmal. We also recognize that the pandemic severely impacted the ability of public health resources to support people in need of HIV and ASO services. If we are elected we promise to:

- Provide culturally competent and gender affirming health, mental health and long-term care
- Fully cover medications that prevent and treat HIV, including PrEP and antiretroviral therapy
- Reduce wait times and barriers to gender-affirming surgeries
- Build 2,000 supportive homes for 2SLGBTQ+ youth
- Ensure 2SLGBTQ+ youth are welcomed and supported in schools
- Provide \$20 million to 2SLGBTQ+ community centres, organizations and Prides
- Lift the freeze on new consumption and treatment sites
- Reconvene the opioid emergency task force
- Expand access to life saving harm reduction supplies like naloxone and fentanyl testing strips.
- Increase ODSP and OW rates by 20% by 2024

We look forward to engaging with Pozitive Pathways further during the election campaign.

Thank you,  
Linda "

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### **3. Essex - Riding**

There were no responses from candidates within the Essex Riding

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## 4. Chatham-Kent-Leamington - Riding



**Candidate: Brock McGregor**

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