

October 8, 2008

**RE: FSNA Questionnaire**

Attached please find the response of Canada's New Democrats to your 2008 Election questionnaire. It is the policy of our party to respond on behalf of all New Democrat candidates.

To find out more, we encourage you to consult: [www.ndp.ca](http://www.ndp.ca)

Thank you for your interest in the views of Canada's New Democrats on the critical issues facing Canadians.

We appreciate your efforts to help voters make an informed decision on voting day.

Sincerely,



Jack Layton  
Leader of Canada's New Democrats

## **New Democrat Response**

### **1) Marriage date-related restriction under federal superannuation plans**

New Democrats have long supported removing the “gold-digger” clause of the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act – so that second spouses of Canadian Forces members and veterans have access to pension rights upon the death of the member or veteran. As we are supportive of removing the clause for veterans and their families, we are open to giving this issue serious consideration for all public servants.

### **2) National Pharmaceuticals Strategy**

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Establish a Canada-wide prescription drug program, phasing in drug coverage for all citizens, beginning with catastrophic drug costs, in cooperation with the provinces and territories.

Reduce the cost of prescription drugs for average Canadians and save billions of dollars from provincial health care budgets by implementing a bulk-purchasing plan, in agreement with the provinces and territories.

Introduce measures to ensure that new drugs are evaluated through evidence-based research to be more effective, before they are prescribed by doctors and paid for by Canadians.

Enforce a strict ban on all direct-to-consumer drug advertising, including closing loopholes created by the Conservatives' new consumer legislation.

Fund an independent drug therapy advisory service for doctors across Canada, to share best practices.

Make necessary drugs more affordable by implementing measures to replace high-cost patent drugs with lower-cost generic drugs. We will phase out the "ever-greening" of patent drugs, no longer allowing large pharmaceutical corporations to continually renew their patents with little or no control.

### **3) Home Care Program**

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will create a pan-Canadian home care program, as recommended in the Romanow Report on the future of Medicare, including:

Helping people stay healthy at home and avoid hospital visits.

- Home mental health care case management.
- Post-acute medical care.
- Post-acute rehabilitation.
- Palliative home care.

Our home care program will give 100,000 more Canadian families access to home care. It will significantly reduce wait times for seniors and hospital patients.

#### **4) Poverty among Canadian Seniors**

New democrats strongly feel that retirement with dignity should be attainable in our prosperous nation. To do this, Jack Layton and his team of New Democrats will take immediate action to recognize the contribution made by seniors to:

- Amend the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) so that seniors who have not applied for pension benefits that they have earned – usually because they don't know about the system – are deemed to have applied when eligible. These seniors will receive their pension benefits accordingly and retroactively when necessary.
- Ensure that every senior who is entitled to Old Age Security (OAS) and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) benefits receives them automatically.
- Ensure that all legal residents in Canada over 65 years are entitled to receive OAS and where their income circumstances warrant – the GIS.
- Reimburse seniors who have unfairly lost millions of dollars in OAS and CPP payments due to the Harper government's accounting error on the Consumer Price Index.

Our proposals will build upon our work during this past Parliament where New Democrats:

- Led a national campaign for fair repayment of \$1-billion withheld from CPP/OAS pension cheques between 2001 and 2006 after an accounting error.
- Secured all-party support for the NDP Seniors Charter enshrining every Canadian senior's right to secure income, adequate housing and quality health care.
- Over Harper's objections, secured Parliament's majority approval for the NDP Veterans First Motion calling for an end to unfair rules preventing veterans and their widows from receiving hard-earned pensions and home-care benefits.
- To offer seniors dignity and comfort in retirement, promoted strategies to create more long-term care spaces and expand home-care coverage—and tabled motions to expand CPP/EI coverage to support those caring for family members at home.
- Tabled bills and motions to launch an annual review of income security for seniors, and to protect pensions by ending employer underfunding and securing pensions if employers go bankrupt.