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New Democrats are fighting to make seniors' lives more affordable

The NDP and I continue to fight for seniors in Canada. With the announcement of a national dental care plan we have made some fantastic progress, but there is still more to be done.

When I spoke in the House on Nov. 28, I said [seniors in Canada deserve a National Seniors Strategy](#) that addresses their cost of living, issues with medication, tax fairness and local support structures. I am committed to continuously advocating for that strategy.

JUST ANNOUNCED



Who has access to the NDP Dental Plan*:

- ✓ **Seniors**
- ✓ **People living with a disability**
- ✓ **Children under 18**



The NDP Dental Plan will save you *at least* \$1300 a year.

Dental care

On December 11, the New Democrats delivered dental care that will change the lives of millions of Canadian seniors, including many in the North Island-Powell River riding. This national program will immediately cover 4.5 million seniors, making dental care more accessible to the people who desperately need it.

Starting in December 2023, seniors, people living with a disability, and children under 18 will begin getting enrollment letters for the permanent national dental program, which will allow them to see a dentist for free. Coverage will begin as

early as May 2024.

As the NDP critic for seniors, I've heard from many aging citizens who have gone without proper dentures. They have had to make heartbreaking decisions because they cannot cover the cost of dental care along with other daily necessities.

I am already hearing from seniors who are grateful for the dental care program. A few weeks ago, a senior from my riding approached me to express her gratitude for the plan, which will enable her to have dental cleaning. When I told her the plan involves dental care, not just cleaning, she began crying. Thanks to the high cost of living and her fixed income, she had to go without dental care. Now she doesn't have to.

This plan is not just about saving seniors money, although many will save money. It's about enabling seniors to obtain dental care, including cleaning and dentures, they cannot otherwise afford. It's about recognizing that dental care is a vital part of healthcare, and that far too many seniors go without it because they can't afford it and don't have private insurance.

Included in the program are:

- preventive services, including scaling (cleaning), polishing, sealants, and fluoride
- diagnostic services, including examinations and x-rays
- restorative services, including fillings
- endodontic services, including root canal treatments
- prosthodontic services, including complete and partial removable dentures
- periodontal services, including deep scaling
- oral surgery services, including extractions

Eligible individuals will receive their letter with an application code and instructions based on the following schedule:

Group	Applications open
Seniors aged 87 and above	Starting December 2023

Seniors aged 77 to 86	Starting January 2024
Seniors aged 72 to 76	Starting February 2024
Seniors aged 70 to 71	Starting March 2024
Seniors aged 65 to 69	Starting May 2024
Adults with a valid Disability Tax Credit certificate	Starting June 2024
Children under the age of 18	Starting June 2024

The NDP continues to fight to make dental care more accessible for all Canadians, despite Pierre Poilievre and the Conservatives' repeated attempts to cut funding for critical services. We will continue advocating for vulnerable Canadians, including seniors, to have the access to dental care and other vital services they need.

For more information, [visit the Canadian Dental Care Plan page](#).

Single senior tax fairness

I have also heard from many seniors in my riding and across Canada who are struggling financially because of income tax. Seniors whose spouse has died lose income but find their taxes increase because they lose the ability to split their income.

The current income tax system provides many ways for senior couples to lower their taxes, such as pension splitting. This enables them to pay less in income tax and qualify for additional benefits with no clawbacks. Single seniors deserve similar benefits.

The NDP and I are fighting for tax fairness for single seniors. The cost of living is already high enough for single seniors on a fixed income. They should not pay more in income tax and they should not have to forfeit their Age Amount Tax Credit.

I encourage you to [sign my petition calling for single senior tax fairness](#).

Petition on seniors' housing

Every day, more affordable housing is lost to financialization. This decreases the availability of housing for financially vulnerable Canadians, including seniors. Many seniors are struggling to find stable, affordable housing. We need an investment in housing that makes a difference for Canadians who need a safe place to call home. We need the government to take this crisis seriously.

[I spoke on this issue in the House on Nov. 29](#) and urge you to [sign my petition](#) calling on the government to take meaningful action to address the housing crisis.

Petition on increasing OAS payments for ALL seniors

I am continuing my advocacy towards providing a uniform increased Old Age Security (OAS) benefit for all seniors aged 65 and older. In July 2022, seniors aged 75 and older received an additional 10% on their OAS benefit, while those aged 65-74 had no such increase. This two-tiered system has excluded more than 2 million senior Canadians from the increased benefit, despite the fact that all seniors are affected by the increased cost of living.

As I said in the House on Nov. 21, all seniors deserve OAS benefits that enable them to retire with dignity.



[Please add your name to my online petition to let the government know you agree.](#)

Too many Canadian seniors live in poverty and go without vital services. While the dental care plan has been approved, the NDP has had to tirelessly push the Liberals to implement it. We're pleased that seniors will finally have access to dental care they need. Now it's time to help financially vulnerable seniors by providing tax fairness, affordable housing, and increased OAS payments for all seniors.

Everyone deserves to live above the basic bar of dignity. I will not stop pushing to ensure Canada's seniors get the respect and support they deserve.

Sincerely,

Rachel Blaney, MP
North Island - Powell River



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