

## NDP Response: Disability Alliance BC

September 11, 2021

Helaine Boyd  
Executive Director, Programs and Policy  
Disability Alliance BC

Dear Ms. Boyd,

Thank you for reaching out to us to share the priorities of Disability Alliance BC for the election. We are pleased to have this opportunity to share our commitments for Canadians living with disabilities with you.

New Democrats are committed to building a fully inclusive, barrier-free Canada where every citizen is able to participate equally and fully. We strongly support the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and will make this commitment to human rights a guiding principle for our policies concerning Canadians living with disabilities.

Unfortunately, far too many barriers still exist to a fully inclusive society. The Liberal government of Justin Trudeau has been promising change for years but has not delivered the real substantive change that is needed to lift people with disabilities out of poverty and remove barriers to full and equitable participation.

As you highlight, far too many Canadians living with disabilities are living in poverty. The Liberals have been promising a new Canada Disability Benefit since 2020, but with no plan to implement the benefit before 2024. Then they chose to cynically introduce Bill C-35, a bill that provides no details on benefit amount or eligibility and no timeline, right before the legislature adjourned for the summer, knowing full well the bill would never be debated.

An NDP government will not play politics with the livelihood of people living with disabilities. Instead, we will move quickly to lift all persons living with a disability above the poverty line as part of our plan to build towards a basic guaranteed livable income for all Canadians. Our basic income program will also ensure that what the federal government gives with one hand, the provinces are not allowed to take with the other, leaving Canadians with disabilities without the supports they need. We will also ensure that our basic income program is enshrined in legislation and developed in consultation with people living with disabilities.

We also know that far too often, people with disabilities who want to work face barriers to employment. An NDP government will expand employment programs to ensure that everyone has quality opportunities for employment. We will invest in training programs that help people with disabilities find jobs and implement a new pilot project for EI that will allow people with episodic disabilities to access EI Sickness Benefits with much more flexibility, helping them to maintain employment even when they can't work periodically.

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Finally, we know that even before the pandemic, many Canadians are forced to go without the prescription drug or the medical devices that they need because they simply can't afford them. We will begin work immediately on a national pharmacare program, working with the provinces and territories towards an implementation goal of 2022. This program would ensure that Canadians from coast to coast could access prescription drugs and medical devices with their health cards, not their credit cards.

An NDP government will also expand access to programs and services that address other aspects of daily living for people living with disabilities, including investments in affordable, accessible housing; creating national standards for home care and long-term care; and restoration of door-to-door mail delivery.

Thank you again for your sharing your priorities on behalf of Disability Alliance BC. We look forward to working together to build a future that is more inclusive for everyone.

Sincerely,  
The NDP Team