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PC Party Pledges Support for Women's Health Initiatives

New measures will bring better care sooner for Manitoba women: Guillemard

The Progressive Conservative Party will move Manitoba forward with a number of specialized services that improve the health of women throughout the province if re-elected next month, PC Fort Richmond candidate Sarah Guillemard announced today.

"We have come a long way in a short time in health care, reforming what had been a greatly inefficient system under the NDP into one that delivers results for Manitobans," said Guillemard. "We know women's health needs differ from men in important ways. The changes we have made allow us to make improvements that recognize and support the unique health needs of women."

As part of its continued commitment to improving health care in our province, a re-elected PC government will invest \$3.4 million per year to implement initiatives that help all Manitobans, particularly women.

We will make it easier to get help for urinary tract infections (UTIs). Manitobans suffering from uncomplicated UTIs will be able to get prescriptions directly from a pharmacist instead of having to visit their doctor, an urgent care centre or walk-in clinic. This initiative is already in place in Saskatchewan, Alberta, Quebec and New Brunswick.

UTIs affect 12 to 15 per cent of women annually, according to the New England Journal of Medicine. Approximately 50 per cent of women will experience a UTI by the time they turn 32 years old.

We will enhance mental health and specialized trauma counselling. We will increase our investment in community supports to help women who have experienced childhood sexual abuse and trauma. Our investment will help more women while significantly reducing wait times. Additionally, investments will be made to provide more help for high-risk sexually exploited girls, make improvements to emergency assessment and treatment services and expand mental health walk-in services.

We will establish a four-year Bachelor of Midwifery program. A four-year program will launch at the University of Manitoba in 2020 for up to six students to start. Preferential consideration for three of those seats will be reserved for Indigenous and northern students, where the need for midwives is at its highest.

By training Manitoba students here at home, this initiative goes well beyond an NDP promise made earlier in the campaign. Under the NDP, only eight students graduated from the University College of the North's disastrous multi-million-dollar program over an eight-year period.

We will expand treatment for Manitobans with eating disorders. Recommended in the VIRGO report, a re-elected PC government will lower wait times for Manitobans seeking treatment for eating disorders, including anorexia, bulimia and binge-eating.

As part of the Eating Disorders program, the PC government will:

- invest in two additional inpatient beds, from three to five, in a dedicated emergency department unit;
- establish a medically supported feeding clinic that supports the nutritional resuscitation of inpatients as well as outpatients who require tube feeding or meal support;
- expand outpatient program capacity; and
- improve programming for co-existing eating disorder and substance use disorder patients.

We will ensure patients receive clinically appropriate information on dense breasts. Earlier this year, patients receiving mammograms through CancerCare Manitoba who are in the highest category of breast density started receiving breast density data – a service that was previously only available upon request. We will ensure breast density information is shared more easily with mammogram patients.

CancerCare is currently evaluating the clinical need to share this information with all mammogram patients and will develop a protocol based on their findings that can be adopted by all Manitoba health facilities.

Only the PC Team, with its record number of female candidates, can be trusted to address the important health issues affecting women in Manitoba.

“There is nothing new with Wab Kinew and the NDP,” said Guillemard. “They will take Manitoba backwards with longer wait times and failed health services for women and all Manitobans.”

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