

11 October 2019

Dear Jennifer,

Thank you for writing, for providing us with the opportunity to speak to your community and share the Green Party of Canada's platform, and for your advocacy. Please find our response below.

Best regards,

Kat Lorimer  
Policy Researcher  
Green Party of Canada

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Do you agree with the following statement: Food allergy should be a public health priority in Canada?

Yes. Food allergy should be a public health priority.

As noted above, the [National Food Allergy Action Plan](#) contains a framework to guide future policy and investment decisions in support of the 2.6 million Canadians impacted by food allergy. The focus areas are prevention, management, treatment, and broad-based community and food system support. Does your party commit, in principle, to supporting this plan and its framework?

Yes. The Green Party supports the concepts laid out in the National Food Allergy Action Plan and looks forward to working with you further on it.

We are calling on the next federal government to commit to making a down payment on the implementation of the National Food Allergy Action Plan through a modest allocation in the 2020 Budget of \$3 million. These funds will be used to, among other supports, lead the national implementation of the Canadian Paediatric Society's guidance on early infant feeding and food allergy prevention, to help reduce the prevalence of food allergy. Our full submission to the Standing Committee on Finance is [here](#). Does your party support this budget allocation?

Yes. The Green Party will commit to \$3 million in 2020 as part of reorienting Health Canada's mandate towards mental health and addictions, health promotion and disease prevention, and the health risks of climate change. Allergy prevention falls under the purview of both health promotion and disease prevention.

There is currently just one supplier of epinephrine auto-injectors in the Canadian market, and this one supplier has had supply constraints for over 18 months, making it difficult for Canadians to fill their prescriptions for this life-saving medication. In addition, the cost of an epinephrine auto-injector can be out-of-reach for many Canadians, particularly for those without a drug plan. What is your party's plan to improve reliable, affordable access to epinephrine auto-injectors?

The Green Party will expand the single-payer Medicare model to include Pharmacare for everyone. We will also create a bulk drug purchasing agency and reduce drug patent protection periods. These measures should bring down prices through enhanced buying and purchasing power while also greatly expanding coverage.

Effective self-management starts with proper diagnosis by an allergist, as well as receiving allergy education and support from the point of diagnosis. Unfortunately, many Canadians cannot access an allergist and the problem is particularly acute for those in rural, northern and remote communities. What is your party's plan to improve access to medically trained allergists so that no family has to go out of province for care?

The Green Party would restore the federal/provincial Health Accord, basing health transfers on demographics and real health care needs in each province, replacing the current formula based on GDP growth introduced by the Harper government and retained by the Liberals. This increase in funding would allow all provinces and territories the ability to hire and retain allergists at the level appropriate for their demographic.

New international research is re-shaping our view on how to prevent and treat food allergy, yet food allergy has not been a traditional research priority in Canada. Developing a patient-centered research agenda, rooted in patient engagement, and defining the investment, infrastructure and process is needed to move forward. This will include areas in mental health, treatments and therapies, and other aspects focused on improving quality of life for Canadians with food allergy. What steps would your government take to strengthen research into food allergy in this country?

The Green Party will enhance funding for the granting councils, including the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Canadian Institutes for Health Research.

All Canadians have a right to know what is in the food they consume. Food allergen labelling regulations do not extend to non-pre-packaged foods (e.g. restaurants, bulk foods) and precautionary allergen labelling in the form of "may contain" statements is not delivering against its intended purpose to advise consumers of potential risk. What is your party's plan to improve allergen ingredient disclosure for pre- and non-pre-packaged foods so those with food allergy can make safe, informed choices?

The Green Party will investigate additional regulatory tools for improving allergen disclosure on foods on both pre- and non-pre-packaged foods.

The challenges Canadians affected by food allergy face can lead to enormous psychological, physical, and social consequences. According to a 2017-member survey almost half of respondents described their anxiety level as 8 out of 10 or higher. Food allergy is associated with symptoms of anxiety and depression, and one-in-three children with food allergy report being bullied, specifically because of their food allergy. Will your party commit to supporting a national awareness plan to better educate Canadians of the facts on food allergy and how they can support those with this medical condition, along with new funding for psycho-social interventions?

The Green Party will establish a national mental health strategy and a suicide prevention strategy to address the growing anxieties plaguing Canadians, which should increase availability of psycho-social interventions for those suffering from food allergy. We will work with schools and those in the food and restaurant industries to develop improved curriculum and training around food allergies.

