

This guide was developed with the input of several BCASW members to highlight some of the priority issues that we believe a new government will need to address. During the COVID-19 pandemic it has become more apparent that strong, visionary governance is needed to ensure that BC's most vulnerable populations are adequately supported. The following categories, while clearly interrelated, were identified as areas that members may wish to question or evaluate candidates on.

1. Mental Health and Addictions;
 - The growing opioid crisis and the impact of COVID-19
 - Lack of timely or local access to treatment centres
 - Criminalization vs treatment/support options
 - Impact of the pandemic; social isolation, depression, anxiety
2. Housing/Homelessness;
 - Long term, affordable options
 - Range of models needed that include different levels of supports and services
3. Poverty and Essential Services;
 - Need for universal basic income
 - Income assistance rates insufficient to secure housing
 - Food security issues, particularly children
 - Equitable funding and services required on reserves
 - More availability of affordable child care services
4. Health Care;
 - Timely and equitable access (both for vulnerable population groups and those in remote areas of the province)
 - Access to adequate medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, dental care, hearing tests, etc. (what is the status of the promised new accessibility legislation for persons with disabilities?)
 - Standards of care in long-term care homes and role for social workers within the multidisciplinary care team
 - On line access to services is promising but raises questions about confidential access to equipment, internet connectivity
5. Racism, Discrimination, and Violence:
 - Growing evidence of systemic racism & discrimination
 - Role of police in responding to people with mental health issues

- Increasing level of domestic violence
 - Moving forward with reconciliation with Indigenous peoples
6. Social Work Profession;
- Mandatory registration required to protect the public
 - Protection of title required for public confidence
 - Working conditions and compensation for social workers

Compiled by;

Kimberly Azyan, Director, &

Michael Crawford, President

BC Association of Social Workers