

Manitoba PC Caucus Review

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PROMISE MADE, PROMISE KEPT: AMBULANCE FEES REDUCED TO \$250

April 5, 2019



Keeping its promise to provide families with more affordable emergency medical services (EMS), the Manitoba government has reduced ambulance fees, effective immediately, to no more than \$250 per ride, Premier Brian Pallister announced this week.

“Three years ago, Manitobans were paying the highest ambulance fees in the country,” said Pallister. “Since taking office, our government lowered those fees by 50 per cent, ensuring more Manitobans going through a potentially life-threatening medical emergency won’t worry about whether they can afford an ambulance before calling for one.”

The provincial government worked with regional health authorities, Shared Health and other ambulance providers to ensure the fee reduction is consistent and will provide reliable and affordable care in all corners of the province. Fees were reduced in stages from an average of \$500 in 2016 to \$425 in 2017, then again to \$340 last year. This additional \$90 reduction per trip, first announced in Budget 2019 and in effect today, means Manitoba now offers the lowest ambulance fees among all Prairie provinces.

Since 2016, the Manitoba government has worked diligently to develop a 24-7 paramedic workforce of skilled professionals that are better equipped to handle the daily challenges they face. Our investments build on the government’s commitment to enact recommendations made in the 2013 EMS System Review that, when complete, will ensure response time targets are achieved and paramedics are able to work to their full scope of practice.

Manitobans are reminded to call for a paramedic to access high-quality, reliable health care in emergency situations rather than driving themselves to a local hospital or emergency department.

For more information on emergency medical services in Manitoba, visit:

www.gov.mb.ca/health/ems/index.html.

MANITOBA TO CHALLENGE FEDERAL CARBON TAX IN COURT



The Manitoba government will launch a legal challenge of the federal government's decision to impose its carbon tax on Manitobans, Premier Brian Pallister confirmed this week.

"Last year, our government received legal advice the federal government has the constitutional power to impose a carbon tax, but only on provinces that do not implement plans of their own," said the premier. "The result was our *Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan*, which is better for Manitoba's economy, and better for our environment."

"Ottawa acknowledged that our plan is the best in Canada, but they would not provide the assurance we sought," said the premier. "They stated they would impose their higher – and rising – carbon tax on Manitobans. They have now done this, despite granting special treatment and exemptions to other provinces.

"This conduct by the federal government is unfair to Manitobans. It threatens jobs and economic growth throughout Manitoba. It makes it more expensive to feed our families and keep them warm during the winter. It hurts northern Manitobans. It hurts our agricultural industry and transportation sector," he added.

PROVINCE STREAMLINES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The Manitoba government has launched a new Building Sustainable Communities Program that will streamline and modernize grant support to non-profit organizations, Municipal Relations Minister Jeff Wharton announced this week.

"Our government recognizes the importance of community development initiatives and supporting non-profit organizations," said Wharton. "This new program will support a broader range of community-led projects and deliver on our mandate to renew community development programs to best serve the needs of Manitobans."

The new \$7.9-million Building Sustainable Communities Program will transform and modernize grant funding with a focus on increasing community capacity and promoting sustainability for non-profit organizations. The new program replaces seven legacy grant programs that each had significant administration, rigid requirements and operated in silos. The overall funding levels for community grants remains consistent, the minister noted.

The modernized grant program will respond to local neighbourhood, municipal and regional priorities while providing a more comprehensive grant funding package to support a broader range of projects including planning, capital (construction), capacity building, and recreation and equipment purchases among others. The program will also reduce both applicant and administrative red tape and duplication, Wharton added.

Intake for the program opens today and application deadline is May 22. For more information, or to submit an application, visit www.manitobago.ca.

APRIL IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

The Manitoba government will raise awareness about the prevalence of sexual assault, share information about available resources and attempt to foster a greater understanding of consent as part of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Sustainable Development Minister Rochelle Squires, minister responsible for status of women, announced this week.

“The issue of sexual violence is still deeply pervasive in all sectors of society,” said Squires. “Sexual Assault Awareness Month is a time to reflect on the changes we can all make as leaders, elected officials, individuals and communities to support a culture where sexual violence – whether it takes place in our workplaces, schools, on the street, online, or in our homes – is not tolerated.”

Last month, the province introduced amendments to The Residential Tenancies Act that would enhance supports for survivors of domestic and sexual assault.

The minister stressed the Manitoba government continues to take steps to address sexual harassment and respect in the workplace, with the launch of a new sexual harassment awareness campaign to promote safe working environments.

Last year, the province launched an online resource called You Have Options: Help After Sexual Assault, which offers information on how to recognize sexual assault, navigate the criminal justice system, make a report and find support. The minister noted the resource has now been translated into Spanish, Punjabi, French and Cree, and is available at www.gov.mb.ca/justice/crown/victims/sexualassault.html.

For more information on available supports, health information, police information and information on consent, visit the You Are Not Alone webpage at www.gov.mb.ca/youarenotalone/.

PROVINCE ESTABLISHES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Open For Business

The Manitoba government is moving forward to implement key elements of its Economic Growth Action Plan and ensure the co-ordinated delivery of economic development services by regional and strategic partner organizations, Premier Brian Pallister announced this week.

“Manitobans entrusted our government to help rebuild the province’s economy. Our plan is based on the advice we received from representatives of business, industry, economic development organizations, Indigenous groups and academia,” said Pallister. “We are establishing a focused approach to supporting economic development that builds on Manitoba’s strengths and better responds to the needs of business and industry.”

A new Economic Development Office (EDO) has been established. In addition, mandate letters outlining the key roles and responsibilities of the province’s regional and strategic partners have been delivered to each organization. The letters reflect a ‘Team Manitoba’ approach that emphasizes co-ordination, avoiding duplication and ensuring clear pathways for businesses, entrepreneurs and investment.

“Manitoba is becoming a more attractive place for new businesses to start, for existing businesses to grow, and for foreign businesses to invest,” said Pallister. “We’re focused on making Manitoba the most improved province in Canada in partnership with business and industry.”