



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

You never know when you'll get a chance to ask MPs or other government representatives about their positions on the issues most important to older adults in Canada. Keep this sheet handy. These questions are friendly conversation starters, and you can use the information shared here as quick speaking points when you connect with MPs or other representatives. And remember, you can always ask follow-up questions if the answer is unclear or you want to know more!

NATIONAL SENIORS STRATEGY

- By 2030, adults aged 65 or older will make up 23 per cent of Canada's population and number over 9.5 million. They represent the fastest growing segment of the population. What are you doing to ensure the needs of older adults are met today and in the future?
- A coordinated national seniors strategy, with dedicated funding and accountable goals, will help ensure evolving needs of older Canadians are met. What is your party doing to develop and implement a national seniors strategy?
- A national seniors strategy is needed to control the increasing costs related to an aging population, relieve the pressure being placed on an already stressed health care system and ensure older Canadians get the care they need, when and where they need it. How is your party working to ensure Canada gets the national seniors strategy it needs?
- Addressing ageism is an element of a national seniors strategy. Ageism manifests in how we think, feel, and act toward older persons, and it is also influenced by gender, race, and orientation. One in three Canadians admit they have treated someone differently due to their age, and while age is a protected ground in Canadian human rights, that's not the case globally. This means older persons do not have equitable enjoyment of human rights. United Nations conventions can help improve this. Federal Retirees is calling on Canada to ensure the United Nations adopts a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. How will your party work to ensure Canada advances a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons?

LONG-TERM CARE

- Older adults have different needs at different stages of life. Most people want to age at home and in their communities but require support to do so. The long-standing issues with long-term care highlighted by COVID-19 have only intensified peoples' desire to age at home. What is your party doing to improve older adult care and ensure comprehensive, timely and quality long-term care and home and community care?
- *For federal representatives:* Do you support implementing national standards for long-term care with funding that is dependent on meeting those standards?
 - If yes, what are you/your government/your party doing to push for implementation and enforcement of long-term care standards through accountability tied to funding?
 - If no, why not? What is your solution for the issues we know exist with long-term and home care?
- *For provincial/territorial representatives:* Do you support the implementation of national standards with funding that is dependent on meeting those standards to ensure accountability for long-term and home care?
 - If yes, what are you/your government/your party doing to push for their implementation? Are you willing to work with the federal government and other provinces/territories to implement national standards?
 - If no, why not? What is your solution for the issues we know exist with long-term and home care?



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

RETIREMENT INCOME SECURITY

- Canadians deserve dignity and security in retirement. What is your party doing to prioritize retirement income security?
- Retirement income security must be prioritized through the development of strong policy. What is your party doing to support and protect pensions and retirement benefits?
- Retirees with defined benefit plans are less likely to rely on government assistance such as the Guaranteed Income Supplement. In fact, defined benefit pensions reduce the annual GIS payout by \$2-3 billion each year. What is your party doing to protect and strengthen well-managed defined benefit pensions and stop legislation that would allow plan sponsors to walk away from their pension promises?
- There are over 2.1 million Guaranteed Income Supplement recipients in Canada. To qualify for the GIS, you must be 65 years of age and your annual income must be below \$20,952 (in 2023). This is under the poverty line in most urban areas, and only slightly above the poverty line in rural areas. Millions of seniors are living in poverty in Canada. What are you doing to help lift vulnerable older adults out of poverty?
- What is your party doing to encourage innovation and effectiveness in retirement savings options?
- In a survey of Federal Retirees members, 42 per cent of those who had retired in the past three years said they had been affected by Phoenix — ranging from years waiting for severance pay to situations where individuals now owe the government substantial sums because they never stopped being paid. 74 per cent of public servants have indicated that their pay has been affected by Phoenix. What is your party doing to ensure proper compensation for Phoenix pay system errors and correct federal public servant retiree and veteran compensation?

PHARMACARE

- Canada is the only country in the world with a universal health care system that does not include universal prescription drug coverage. What steps is your party currently taking to implement a universal, public pharmacare program?
- Approximately 20 per cent of Canadians have inadequate drug coverage to meet their needs. How will your party ensure a universal, public pharmacare program will be based on the Pharmacare Consensus Principles (universality; public, single-payer administration; accessibility; comprehensiveness; portable coverage)?
- A universal, public pharmacare program will reduce demands on other parts of the health care system at a time when the system is overloaded. Pharmacare is also estimated to save the health care system \$4 to \$11 billion annually. How will your party ensure a universal, public pharmacare program coordinates with existing public and private prescription drug coverage?
- Two in three Canadians 65 or older are prescribed five or more prescription medications, while more than 26 per cent are prescribed ten or more different prescription medications. And it is estimated that as many as half of the drugs prescribed to older adults are either taken incorrectly or overprescribed. What steps will your party take to make sure a universal, public pharmacare program monitors the prescription and use of drugs to ensure the safe, appropriate, and rational use of medications?



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

VETERANS

- Women comprise about 16 per cent of the military; the goal is to have 25 per cent serving by 2026. Women are the fastest growing segment of Veterans Affairs Canada's clients. What is your party doing to achieve equitable outcomes for serving military and veteran women?
- The biggest stressors during transition to civilian life, as described by veterans, are maintaining financial security, health issues and maintaining a family life. Broken lines of communication between government departments, incorrect or incomplete information being provided, information overload and difficulty processing the volume of things necessary to transition were cited. How is your party working to ensure veterans experience a seamless, supported, successful transition and release from service?
- Ill and injured veterans receive inadequate home care and long-term care support. With 32 separate policies and 28 distinct eligibility groups, the programs are too complex and are based on type of military service rather than need. In addition, injured and ill veterans are often cared for by spouses, adult children, parents and extended family. Veteran women — especially if single or divorced — and service couples with a deployable spouse may face more challenges finding a caregiver for themselves. What improvements is your party working on to ensure ill and injured veterans and their informal caregivers are supported?
- The most common complaints received by the Veterans' Ombuds Office are about the length of time it takes to get a decision from Veterans Affairs Canada on disability benefits, inconsistencies in how certain groups were treated, a lack of prioritization for those who may be at risk and a lack of transparency and communication. How are you working to ensure timely and transparent assessments and reassessments for veterans?
- Many veterans have felt disrespected and hurt by inadequate communication — whether in-person, by phone or in written and electronic communications - as they tried to access programs, services or compensation. Some veterans have indicated a low level of trust in, and a feeling of institutional betrayal by, Veterans Affairs Canada. What is your party doing to rebuild institutional trust with veterans?

