



A HEALTHIER FUTURE FOR AGING IN NEW BRUNSWICK

New Brunswick will head to the polls by Oct. 21. During this election, Federal Retirees is calling on the province's next government to create a healthier future for aging by improving the quality and availability of older adult care in New Brunswick.

This work is more important now than ever before.

By 2030, adults aged 65 or older will make up 23 per cent of Canada's population and number over 9.5 million.

According to the 2021 Census — the most recent year for which this data is available — 22.8 per cent of the New Brunswick population is aged 65 or older. In New Brunswick, as in all Atlantic provinces, older adults represent a higher proportion of the population than in the rest of Canada.

Older adults deserve to age with dignity, and it's time to create a healthier future for aging in New Brunswick.

This provincial election is our chance to do that.

KEY MESSAGES

During this election, Federal Retirees is calling for New Brunswick's next provincial government to:

- Protect defined benefit pension plans.
- Enable aging in place by ensuring timely access to needed supports.
- Improve access to care through provision of funding and services.

ABOUT FEDERAL RETIREES

The National Association of Federal Retirees (Federal Retirees) is the largest national advocacy organization representing active and retired members of the federal public service, Canadian Armed Forces, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and retired federally

appointed judges, as well as their partners and survivors. With more than 170,000 members from coast to coast to coast, including 7,400 in New Brunswick, Federal Retirees has advocated for improvements to the financial security, health and well-being of our members and all Canadians since 1963.

THE ISSUES

Protect defined benefit pension plans

In 2023, the New Brunswick government pushed through the Pension Plan Sustainability and Transfer Act. The legislation transfers public service pensions from a defined benefit plan to a "shared-risk" model, requiring employees to make up for shortfalls, effectively moving pension risk from the government to the employees. And, it could mean higher contribution rates and lower benefits depending on market performance.

The legislation covers five employee groups — 7,200 school custodians, maintenance workers, bus drivers and educational support staff as well as nursing home employees in the province.

This sets a concerning precedent and serves as a stark reminder that governments, as the legislator, employer and pension plan sponsor for public servants, hold significant power to make unilateral legislative changes that make retirements less secure.

Canadians deserve dignity and security in retirement. New Brunswick's next government must prioritize retirement income security by developing strong policies that support and protect pensions and retirement benefits.

Life is becoming unaffordable. The next government must take on measures that will make it easier for New Brunswickers to make ends meet.

With record inflation in the last three years, older New Brunswickers have seen their purchasing power dwindle, particularly with substantial increases to rent, groceries, utilities, and medications.





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Rising prices have made things especially difficult for older adults on a fixed income.

One of the best tools to ensure that retirees have some protection against the rise of cost-of-living is defined benefit pension plans with indexation to ensure pensions keep up with the cost of living.

Defined benefit pensions are efficient and effective, and enable retirees to contribute to a strong economy.

New Brunswick's next government must ensure protection of the benefits retirees earned and were promised, by increasing access to defined benefit plans and rejecting legislation that threatens these pension plans.

Enable aging in place

More than 170,000 New Brunswickers are aged 65 or older. Most older adults want to age in place, at home, in their communities.

Older adults represent the fastest-growing segment of the population. But gaps in healthcare and social policies are putting barriers in the way of their independence and undermining their role in maintaining vibrant, healthy communities and economies.

Community and home care enable people to live at home, remain safe and independent and improve or maintain their health and quality of life through supports ranging from nursing to personal care to homemaking. Unpaid caregivers play an essential role in enabling aging in place; caregivers deserve financial and other support such as respite to fulfill this role.

New Brunswick's next government must improve access to care, by investing in and ensuring funding and services to enable aging in place – including timely access to publicly-funded home care, access to local care providers, support for caregivers and improved wait times for care.

New Brunswick's next government must invest in tools and programs to enable older adults to age in place and ensure the work of caregivers is recognized and supported.

Improve access to care

The Canada Health Act guarantees that access to health-care services is a fundamental right for all Canadians. And access to a primary care provider is key to healthy aging. Primary care is the foundation of the health care system, yet it is strained, and access to primary care is a challenge for many New Brunswickers.

The New Brunswick Medical Society reports there are over 80,000 New Brunswickers currently on a waitlist for a family physician. Based on current trends, that number could reach 100,000 by the end of 2024.

In a survey conducted by the New Brunswick Health Council, 69 per cent of New Brunswickers reported using other health services because their primary care provider was not available.

And New Brunswickers are still waiting twice as long as other Canadians for hip and knee surgeries.

Consistent primary care is essential to manage health, and without it, New Brunswickers are increasingly winding up in emergency rooms, with severe or more complex conditions that are harder to treat. New Brunswickers' well-being, quality of life and health outcomes are suffering, and informal caregivers are stretched to the limit. New Brunswickers need access to primary care where they live.

New Brunswick's next government must invest in the continuum of care, from primary to home to long-term care, and address wait times in the public health-care system.



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Talking to candidates

You never know when you'll get a chance to ask candidates or their campaigners about their positions on the issues most important to older adults in New Brunswick.

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 candidates and their campaigners. And remember, you can always ask follow-up questions if the answer is unclear or you want to know more!

- 1 Seniors are a fast-growing demographic in New Brunswick. What is your party's strategy to meet seniors' needs?
- 2 How will party ensure that defined benefit plans, the best way to make sure retirees have a secure long-term income in retirement, are protected and encouraged in New Brunswick?
- 3 How will your party support older adults in New Brunswick to age in place?
- 4 How will you ensure the work of caregivers is recognized and supported?
- 5 What is your party's plan to ensure New Brunswickers have access to a family doctor through our public health care system?
- 6 How will your party invest in public health care and improve the continuum of health care services for New Brunswickers?

And be sure to follow-up and ask candidates and their campaigners when they'll follow through on their promises to older adults in New Brunswick.

