

## **CANADA VOTES 2025: ACCESSIBLE, SAFE AND QUALITY LONG-TERM CARE**

Quality and equitable health care along the continuum of care enables older Canadians to age with dignity and live where they choose. Most Canadians want to age in their home and communities, and when it's needed, safe, quality, affordable long-term care must be available. To ensure quality, equitable and accountable care, national standards for both long-term care and home and community care must be implemented and enforced in collaboration with the provinces and territories and tied to appropriate levels of funding. Our focus should be on the care of older Canadians, not profit – and it's time for an evidence-based, forward-looking continuum of care that does that.

### **Home and community care**

- Aging in the right place is “the process of enabling healthy aging in the most appropriate setting based on an older person’s personal preferences, circumstances and care needs.”
- Canadians would prefer to age at home, and home care services are less costly than care in institutionalized settings. But access to affordable home and community care services is challenging. In 2021, 475,000 people – mostly older Canadians – reported unmet home care needs.
- Canada is facing critical health workforce challenges, including a shortage of nurses and personal support workers.
- Affordability is also a concern. Private home care costs can range from \$1,000 to \$3,500 per month and are even greater for those with complex care needs. Just over half (52 per cent) of Canadians who receive home care services are from solely publicly funded sources.
- Investing in home and community care will improve health outcomes, enhance choice and dignity, and reduce health-care costs.

### **Long-term care**

- The pandemic exposed staffing shortages, fragmentation and inconsistent quality of care in long-term care settings, and those issues persist today.
- Canadians expect all levels of government to work together to ensure safe, quality person-centered care in Canada, including long-term care.
- Spending on long-term care is expected to triple over the next 30 years, yet progress to improve quality, access and health outcomes has been slow.
- Critical progress has been made on new national standards. Developed by experts with the full participation of people with lived experience, the standards provide a minimum standard of quality and reliability, including resident and family-centred practices, and a healthy workforce, along with infection prevention and control – but the standards are voluntary.

### **CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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- A review by the National Institute on Ageing (NIA) found uneven alignment and gaps between the provinces and territories and the national standard, showing there is more work to be done.
- To ensure quality, equitable, consistent and accountable care for all older Canadians, national standards for both long-term care and home and community care must be implemented and enforced in collaboration with the provinces and territories, with appropriate levels of funding. Consultations on a Safe Long-term Care Act are done – now Canadians are waiting for action.
- The focus of long-term care should be the care of older Canadians, not profit. It's time for an evidence based, forward-looking long-term care delivery model that prioritizes care for Canadians and drives lasting change through innovation, collaboration, evaluation and improvement.

### Questions to candidates

- 1) National standards:** Because national long-term care standards are voluntary, long-term and home care in Canada are a patchwork of inconsistent legislation and uneven care. Will your party act quickly to collaborate with the provinces and territories to implement Canada's national long-term care standards across the country with appropriate levels of funding, so Canadians have safe, quality, accessible home, community and long-term care when they need it?
  - Ideal response:

To ensure quality, equitable and accountable care for all older Canadians, our government would implement and enforce national standards for both long-term care and home and community care, working in collaboration with provinces and territories and tied to appropriate levels of funding. Long-term care should be for the care of older Canadians, not profit, with a delivery model that is evidence-based, prioritizes quality of life, culturally-safe and inclusive care, resident safety, a well-supported workforce and greater reporting and transparency. We are committed to a Safe Long-term Care Act to make this a reality.
- 2) Aging in the right place:** Canada's health and social infrastructure are not keeping pace with an aging population. We need action and investment now. What will your party do to enable older Canadians to age with dignity in their place of choosing?
  - Ideal response:

Our government will invest across health care, housing, employment, and digital access, and ensure the voices and lived experiences of older Canadians inform how and what we invest in. We will invest in environments that recognize and support the contributions and autonomy of older persons, while ensuring older persons and caregivers have the resources, supports and services to maintain quality of life. To address workforce challenges, we will strengthen recruitment and retention of health and social human resources for home and community care, and act on the recommendations from the National Seniors Council Expert Panel Supporting Canadians Aging at Home.
- 3) Caregiving supports:** Caregivers are important care partners, supporting aging in place and filling the gaps in a health-care system under strain. This work is unpaid and can be fulfilling and meaningful, yet caregivers experience greater financial burdens and higher levels of stress. As part

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of a national aging and seniors' strategy, Federal Retirees is calling for increased support for caregivers. How will your party provide greater support for caregivers in Canada?

- Ideal response:

The work of caregivers deserves recognition and support. Our government would help more caregivers access benefits, financial assistance and other supports by expanding and standardizing the definitions of "caregiver" and "dependent"; increase the value of the Canada Caregiver Credit by making it refundable and available to all caregivers across Canada; invest in tools and programs to assist caregivers, ensuring people are aware and can access these; and uphold the commitment to develop a National Caregiving Strategy.

**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, Federal Retirees has advocated for improvements to the financial security, health and well-being of our members and all Canadians since 1963.

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