



Parkinson Canada



# Federal Election Toolkit 2025

[parkinson.ca](https://parkinson.ca)

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# FEDERAL ELECTION 2025 TOOLKIT OVERVIEW

## KEY PARKINSON'S FACTS IN CANADA

Election time is the perfect opportunity to engage with community leaders, raise awareness of issues important to you and in turn, enact change. This election period, we encourage our community to communicate with their candidates and make sure your voice is heard!

**110K**

More than 110,000 people live with Parkinson's in Canada.

**53%**

of people with Parkinson's surveyed had to stop working or retire earlier than planned due to Parkinson's.

**41%**

Care partners saw an average income decline of 41%.

**92%**

of care partners saw an income decline after taking on care responsibilities.

**90%**

90% of costs are borne by those affected by Parkinson's and their care partners.

**3.3B**

In 2024, the estimated cost of Parkinson's in Canada is \$3.3 billion, expected to reach \$4.4 billion by 2034.

For more information and data, please visit [parkinsonpricetag.ca](https://parkinsonpricetag.ca) and view our full report on *The Economic Burden of Parkinson's in Canada*.

# HELP MAKE PARKINSON'S AN ELECTION ISSUE

Let's make sure that every political candidate makes Parkinson's a priority! Election time is the perfect opportunity to engage with community leaders, raise awareness of issues important to you and in turn, enact change. This election period, we encourage our community to communicate with their candidates and make sure your voice is heard.

Canadians are heading to the polls, and we are asking the members of the Parkinson's community to reach out to your electoral candidates and call on them to prioritize Parkinson's. Leaders in Ottawa need to know that Parkinson's has a huge impact on our country and that our concerns need addressing.

This toolkit provides you with a step-by-step guide on how to effectively engage with candidates, some key Parkinson's information, and the current realities of health care in Canada.



## STEP 1

*Get Prepared*

### An overview of Parkinson's in Canada

In 2024, Parkinson Canada released an eye-opening report on the financial burden that Parkinson's has on not only those living with the condition, but care partners and the health care system as well. [The Economic Burden of Parkinson's in Canada](#) report shows the cost of Parkinson's stands at \$3.3 billion in 2024, growing to \$4.4 billion in 2034 as the number of people affected by Parkinson's increases. 90% of these costs are shouldered by those living with Parkinson's and their care partners. You can learn more by visiting [ParkinsonsPricetag.ca](https://ParkinsonsPricetag.ca).

In addition to these costs, there are some major barriers to accessing Parkinson's care and support in Canada. There is a lack of Movement Disorder Specialists in Canada, inconsistent pharmacare programs, slow approvals for new medications, as well as cumbersome and complicated application processes for tax credits and disability supports. This needs to be corrected, so that people living with Parkinson's and their care partners can live well.

Parkinson Canada has been engaging our leaders in Ottawa during our annual Hill Day events and with one-to-one meetings. We have built connections with each major federal party and continue to provide policymakers with key insights about Parkinson's and what the needs of the Parkinson's community in Canada are. In 2024, Parkinson Canada also convened Parliamentarians, clinicians and researchers, and the Parkinson's community for a national roundtable discussion on Parkinson's in Ottawa. This roundtable gave politicians the opportunity to speak directly with our community members while allowing community members to share their stories with researchers and elected officials.

Parkinson's priorities in Canada:

**1) Access to medicines:**

- Access to medicines is a critical priority. The federal government must ensure our community has access to the best Parkinson's medicines available. Any pharmacare plan that is further developed by the federal government should prioritize patient needs and preferences, ensuring comprehensive medication access, quick approvals for new drugs, and the enhanced sustainability of Canadian health care.

**2) Fair financial assistance and access to disability supports:**

- Parkinson's is a chronic and progressive illness that often leads to higher expenses. The federal government must address known eligibility and accessibility barriers to the Disability Tax Credit and, given its known shortcomings, the government should ensure it is not the only route to receiving the new Canada Disability Benefit.

**3) Access to health professionals:**

- Caring for the growing number of people with Parkinson's requires treatment from a team of health professionals, often in specialized clinics that can be difficult to access. The federal government must work with the provinces and territories to ensure there are adequate numbers of specialists being trained and entering practice in Canada. This includes removing barriers to the credentialing of internationally trained health care professionals and inter-provincial mobility.

**4) Research funding and better data collection:**

- Decision-makers should ensure robust demographic data on the state of Parkinson's is collected and updated regularly by each Province. By working with the provinces on better health data, the Federal Government can help Parkinson's research efforts immensely.

## 5) Support for care partners:

- Care partners play a critical role in supporting the Parkinson's community but the mental, physical, and financial strain of providing this support amounts to more than a full-time job. The Federal Government must expedite the development of the National Caregiver Strategy and listen to the needs faced by care partners and provide adequate supports.

If you'd like to read more about our advocacy priorities and how we presented them to federal elected officials during our recent Hill Day, please follow [this link](#).



## STEP 2

*Identify your electoral candidate and other relevant voting information.*

To find your electoral district, candidates, voting locations, how to register, accessibility services available and more, please visit: [Elections Canada - Home Page](#)



## STEP 3

*Get Involved*

**Engage with your candidates**

Here are a few ways you can get involved and have your voice heard by your candidate:

- 1) Visit [Parkinson.ca](#) for further information and send a letter directly to your electoral candidates.
- 2) Connect with your candidates through social media, by tagging them, and using the #PrioritizeParkinson's hashtag. See some examples on the next page.
- 3) Meet with your candidates in-person, virtually, or by phone to share your message.
- 4) Write a letter or email to your electoral candidate. See templates and letter-writing tips below.
- 5) Follow your candidate on social media and subscribe to their newsletters to familiarize yourself with their activities and priorities.

## Strategic asks for your candidates

The objective of outreach to your candidates, including meetings and letters, is to build a relationship with the candidate while raising awareness about Parkinson's and to find areas of shared priorities. Consider raising the following questions when engaging with candidates:

1. Ask what their top priorities will be if elected and how Parkinson Canada and you, as a constituent, can help them accomplish these.
2. Ask what measures their party intends to take for people living with Parkinson's in Canada to have access to medicines that can help manage symptoms.
3. Ask how their party intends to improve access to disability supports to allow those living with Parkinson's to manage the additional financial burden of living with a chronic condition.
4. Request that the candidate show their support for what you have discussed by sharing a message on social media emphasizing the importance of improving health care for those living with Parkinson's in Canada, using the #PrioritizeParkinsons hashtag.
5. Ask the candidate to learn more about Parkinson's. A great place for them to start is our website [www.parkinson.ca](http://www.parkinson.ca) or by emailing [advocacy@parkinson.ca](mailto:advocacy@parkinson.ca).
6. Request that the candidate share what they have learned on the need for improved health care outcomes for people with Parkinson's with their party and in government, if elected.



# SOCIAL MEDIA POST EXAMPLES



[Redacted Name]  
[Redacted Handle]

Projections suggest that by 2031, the number of Canadians over 40 living with Parkinson's will increase by 65%, reaching approximately 163,700 individuals. #PrioritizeParkinsons



[Redacted Name]  
[Redacted Handle]

53% of people with Parkinson's surveyed reported needing to retire earlier than planned while also facing high out-of-pocket costs to manage their symptoms. I'm raising awareness of Parkinson's this federal election and I ask that you join me! #PrioritizeParkinsons



[Redacted Name]  
[Redacted Handle]

There are over 110,000 people living with Parkinson's in Canada, and the number is continuing to rise each year. The time is now to ensure equitable, timely, and affordable access to care. #PrioritizeParkinsons



[Redacted Name]  
[Redacted Handle]

33% of people with Parkinson's surveyed experienced a salary decrease of 20% or more when compared to their salary pre-diagnosis. We need fair financial support now! #PrioritizeParkinsons



[Redacted Name]  
[Redacted Handle]

87% of care partners surveyed are supporting someone with Parkinson's without compensation. Without proper support, care partners will burn out. Care partners deserve recognition and support! #PrioritizeParkinsons



[Redacted Name]  
[Redacted Handle]

In 2024, the total cost of Parkinson's in Canada is estimated at \$3.3 billion. People with Parkinson's and their care partners bear approximately 90% of these costs. Parkinson's must be a policy priority! #PrioritizeParkinsons



## Considerations when interacting with your candidates

1. Candidates are very busy during elections as they are meeting with as many constituents as possible. Depending on their campaign schedule, candidates may or may not be able to take a one-to-one meeting. If your candidate agrees to a meeting, be prepared and expect to have no more than 15-30 minutes with them.
2. Meetings are not the only way to get time with a candidate. Check the news or the candidates' website for local events they will be attending. Local events can be a great opportunity for you to introduce yourself and briefly share your issues and concerns. Remember to be prepared and concise with what you want to say. Sign up for their local newsletters to receive updates on their activities.
3. As a charitable organization, Parkinson Canada is *nonpartisan*. This means that we engage with all parties and their candidates without bias. When advocating on our behalf, please refrain from showing support or favour for one party over another.

## Suggested agenda for meeting with candidates

1. Introductions
  - Share your connection to Parkinson's.
  - Ask if they have a connection to Parkinson's or familiarity with the condition.
2. Parkinson's in Canada and request
  - Share key information and data on Parkinson's by highlighting some main points that were mentioned in step 1 of this document.
  - Request their commitment, if elected, to make Parkinson's a priority and to ensure that improved health care is seen as important.
  - Make it personal by providing your main points on why this is important as it relates to your personal experience.
3. Questions to ask your candidates
  - Refer to the strategic asks from above, or use some of these sample questions:
    - How do you and your party intend to improve the lives of people living with Parkinson's in Canada?
    - How do you and your party intend to improve access to medication for those with Parkinson's?
    - How do you and your party intend to provide more support to informal care partners?
    - Will you share this support publicly by posting on social media with the #PrioritizeParkinsons hashtag?
4. Thank them for their time and let them know you will follow up!

# SAMPLE EMAILS TO CANDIDATES

## 1. Use this email template for meeting requests:

Dear first and last name,

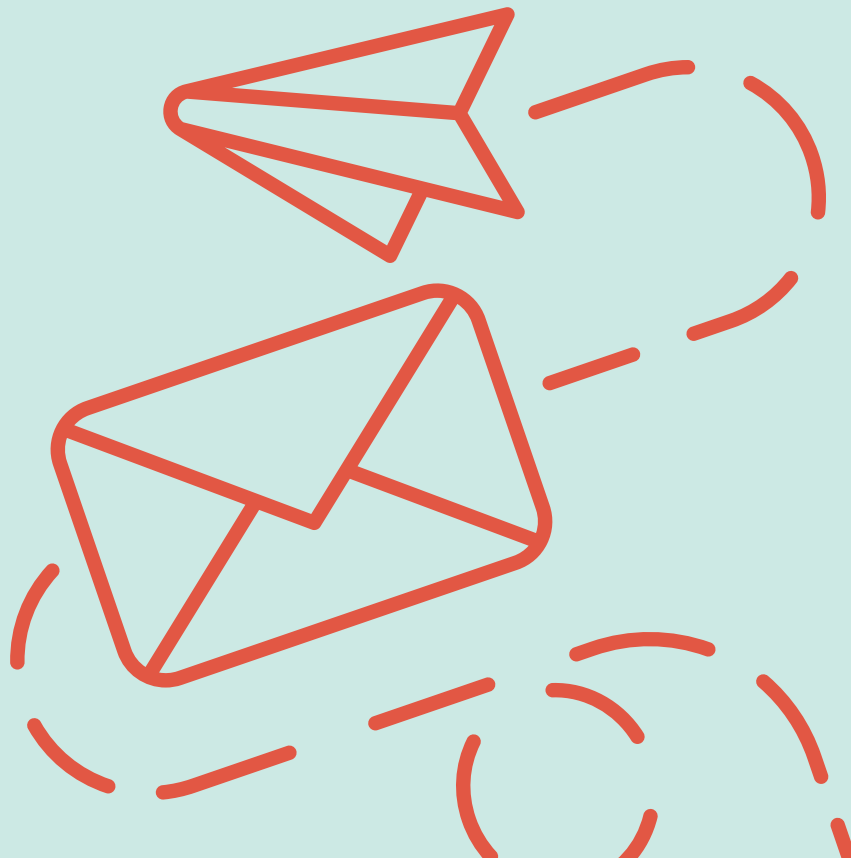
My name is [name]. I am a resident in the riding of [name of riding], for which you are seeking election. I have been [describe if you have been living with Parkinson's, caring for someone living with Parkinson's, and for how long].

As a supporter of the Parkinson's community and in partnership with Parkinson Canada, I am requesting to meet with you to discuss the need for the government to make Parkinson's a priority and commit to improving healthcare for those living with Parkinson's in Canada.

Thank you in advance for your response. I look forward to meeting with you.

[Signed]

[Your Address]



# SAMPLE EMAILS TO CANDIDATES

2. Use this email template if you are unable to meet with your candidate but would like to share your story and requests with them:

Dear first and last name,

My name is [first name, last name]. I am a resident in the riding of [name of riding], for which you are seeking election. I have been [living with Parkinson's for X years/month/caring for my [RELATION TO PERSON LIVING WITH PARKINSON'S] with Parkinson's for X years/months].

During this time, I have experienced [add personal challenges with accessing care/services].

As a supporter of the Parkinson's community and Parkinson Canada, I want to bring your attention to the urgent need to make Parkinson's a priority and seek your commitment, if elected, to improving healthcare for the Parkinson's community.

I would like you to consider the following questions:

1. How do you intend, if elected, to improve the lives of people living with Parkinson's in Canada?
2. What measures does your party intend to take for Canadians to have equitable and affordable access to medicines across Canada?
3. How does your party intend to improve access to disability supports and tax credits for people living with Parkinson's in Canada?
4. Can I count on you to commit to making Parkinson's a priority?
5. Will you write a letter to your party leadership requesting their commitment to make Parkinson's a health care priority?

Thank you in advance for your response.

[Signed]

[Your Address]

**Address your letter correctly.** Be sure you have the correct address and salutation in your letter. Also be sure to double check the spelling of the person's name. It's always best to err on the side of being formal with your correspondence with someone seeking election, as this shows respect and builds stronger relations.

**Only address one issue per letter.** Being concise on one specific topic will make for a quicker and more impactful ask and response.

**Be accurate.** Beware of false or misleading information. Always double-check if you are not sure!

**Make a specific ask.** Make sure to ask your elected official or candidate to act. Whether it is asking for a meeting, a phone call, to support a bill, or a current initiative; always ask for their position on the issue you are addressing.

**Make it personal.** Share your story and how it affects you. Tie in your own experience and expertise using your own words.

**Be polite and courteous.** Rudeness or aggressiveness is sure to alienate the reader.

**Be concise.** Keep your letter as short as possible to ensure that your message is fully read. For letters, it should be no longer than one typed page. If sending an email, no more than 3-5 paragraphs is ideal.

**Include your return address in your letter.** Even in an email, always include your address so that the elected official knows that you live in the riding they represent. Make sure your candidate knows how to reach you and include your phone number if you are comfortable.

**Express appreciation.** Thank them for their time and consideration and add a note about another initiative that they may have taken part in to show that you are following their activities.

**Follow up.** Candidates are busy and it may take weeks to respond. Follow up via phone or email to confirm that they received your letter if you have not received a timely response. When you do receive a response, send a follow-up thank-you letter and ask follow-up questions if they provided unsatisfactory responses. Follow-up letters often have a much larger impact than the initial communication as the elected official will recognize the importance of the issue to you.

# ABOUT PARKINSON CANADA

At Parkinson Canada, people with Parkinson's are at the centre of everything we do. We empower the Parkinson's community through tailored programs, innovative research and raising the voice of people affected by Parkinson's across Canada.

As a national registered charity, Parkinson Canada fulfils its mission through the generosity of donors and is an accredited organization under the Imagine Canada Standards Program.

Please visit [parkinson.ca](https://parkinson.ca), call **1-800-565-3000**, or email [info@parkinson.ca](mailto:info@parkinson.ca) in English or French for more information.

