



# Ontario Election Toolkit 2018

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*Influencing the future Ontario Government*

Jacquie Micallef

Sr. Manager, Public Affairs and Partnerships

1-800-565-3000; ext. 3501

[jacquie.micallef@parkinson.ca](mailto:jacquie.micallef@parkinson.ca) | [www.parkinson.ca](http://www.parkinson.ca)

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## **Step 1 – Identify and Find Out More about Your Local Candidates**

To confirm the electoral district in which you will be casting your vote, go to the following link:

<https://voterinformationservice.elections.on.ca/en/election/search>

To find the names of candidates who are running in your area, go to this link:

<https://www4.elections.on.ca/internetapp/nominationcontests.aspx>

Visit the websites of your local candidates' parties and get their contact information. Take a look at the party platforms.

## **Step 2- Get Prepared**

### **Key Messages about Parkinson's disease and Parkinson Canada**

- Parkinson's is a complex neurodegenerative disease causing symptoms such as: tremor, slowness and stiffness, impaired balance, rigidity of the muscles, fatigue, soft speech, depression, sleep disturbances and cognitive changes.
- There is no single cause for Parkinson's disease and other Parkinsonisms. Parkinson's is most often the result of many things, like age, genes, environment, head trauma and unknown factors. There is no known cure.
- Parkinson Canada is the voice of Canadians living with Parkinson's disease.
- Parkinson Canada provides education and services, advocates to government, and funds innovative research.
- 40,000 Ontarians are living with Parkinson's. The prevalence is increasing dramatically with the aging demographics.
- 30% of Ontarians with Parkinson's have dementia; more than 50% have depression.
- 1 in 5 Ontarians with Parkinson's report poor access to medical specialists.
- 28% of Ontarians with Parkinson's report poor access to movement disorder clinics.

## **Priority for Ontarians with Parkinson's**

Ontario needs a comprehensive, coordinated, and integrated approach to increasing access to specialized, inter-disciplinary care for people with Parkinson's and caregivers.

## **FAQs about the Priority**

### **What do we mean by an "interdisciplinary system of care"?**

Parkinson's is a highly complex condition that impacts movement, cognitive and autonomic functions. This broad range of symptoms requires an integrated and inter-disciplinary approach to treatment and management.

By "interdisciplinary" we mean an inclusive and integrated approach to treatment that takes into consideration the broad range of approaches that can improve quality of life and health outcomes for a person with Parkinson's.

By "system of care" we are getting at the need for coordination and integration of services. This has been modeled in some movement disorder clinics and in memory clinics in the province. Integration means a team-based approach to care with coordination and communication among the various disciplines to ensure that the person is accessing every therapy required to improve their condition. The care would be within a coordinated system so that the person and/or caregiver is/are not left trying to navigate the current system and advocate for access to the services/supports required.

### **Is there currently access to this type of care in Ontario?**

Access to integrated, inter-disciplinary teams is limited for people living with PD. While there are a small number of movement disorder clinics (with varying capacities) in southern, central and eastern Ontario; none such clinics are available in mid to Northern Ontario.

### **What evidence proves the need for this type of care for people with Parkinson's?**

Evidence shows that people with Parkinson's who receive care from integrated, inter-disciplinary teams, particularly those with psychological counselling and exercise programs, have better health outcomes related to depression, mobility impairment, and caregiver burden.

The Canadian Clinical Guidelines for Parkinson's stipulate that people with Parkinson's should have access to clinical monitoring and medication adjustment; a continuing point of contact for support; a reliable source of information about clinical and social matters of concern (for the individual and the caregiver); and different forms of therapy (i.e. physical and exercise therapies; occupational therapy; speech and language therapy).

Exercise and targeted physical therapy needs to be included in an inter-disciplinary system of care for people with Parkinson's. Research has shown that exercise can improve gait, balance, tremor, flexibility, grip strength and motor coordination. There is a strong consensus among physicians and physiotherapists that improved mobility decreases the risk of falls and some other complications of Parkinson's. Experts recommend that people with Parkinson's, particularly young onset or those in the early stages, exercise with intensity for as long as possible as often as possible.

### **Where does our evidence come from?**

Parkinson Canada uses many sources including Ontario's administrative data and a survey recently conducted in collaboration with Ipsos Reid of people with Parkinson's, caregivers, and health care providers.

### **Questions you could ask candidates related to this priority**

1. How does your party intend to improve access to specialists for people with Parkinson's?
2. What measures will your party take to improve system integration and coordination for people living with complex conditions like Parkinson's?

### **Step 3- Get Engaged!**

Here are a few ways you can get involved this election:

1. Attend a town hall to listen to candidates and ask questions related to the priority
2. Write a letter to the candidate
3. Share the story of your experience as a caregiver – this can be powerful!
4. Vote!

## **Guidelines for Meeting with Candidates**

- Candidates are trying to meet with as many voters as possible. Prepare yourself to only have 10 minutes with a candidate.
- Meetings are not the only way to get time with a candidate. Watch for local town hall style debates or events that the candidates will be attending in your local area. Check your local news and candidate websites for updates on where they will be.
- As a charitable organization, the Parkinson Canada is a non-partisan organization. When you are representing the Parkinson Canada, you must not show support for anyone party or candidate. Even if asked outwardly by a candidate or candidate representative for your views, it is important that you remain objective. Fairness must be shown to all candidates.

## Leave-Behind

### What is Parkinson's?

Parkinson's is a complex neurodegenerative disease causing symptoms such as: tremor, slowness and stiffness, impaired balance, rigidity of the muscles, fatigue, soft speech, depression, sleep disturbances and cognitive changes.

There is no single cause for Parkinson's disease and other parkinsonisms.

Parkinson's is most often the result of many things, like age, genes, environment, head trauma and other unknown factors.

There is no cure.

### Parkinson's by the Numbers

**40,000** Ontarians today have Parkinson's

**30%** of Ontarians with Parkinson's have dementia

**50%+** of Ontarians with Parkinson's are significantly impacted by depression

**1 in 5** Ontarians with Parkinson's report poor access to medical specialists and movement disorder clinics

## The Ask

**Ontario needs a comprehensive, coordinated, and integrated approach to increasing access to a specialized, inter-disciplinary system of care for people with Parkinson's and their caregivers.**

Ontarians with Parkinson's need Your Leadership!



## **Feedback Form**

Please provide feedback to Parkinson Canada on your interaction with candidates in your riding area.

1. What riding are you in?
2. What Candidates did you meet with?
3. Did any candidates disclose a connection to Parkinson's disease? If so, who and what was the connection?
4. What feedback can you share from meeting with candidates? Were they supportive?
5. What other information can you share?

Please send this form back to [advocacy@parkinson.ca](mailto:advocacy@parkinson.ca)