

FEDERAL ELECTION 2021 TOOLKIT

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2021 FEDERAL ELECTION TOOLKIT OVERVIEW

A federal election has been called for September 20, 2021, and in the lead up to this election we are asking you – members and supporters of the Canadian Parkinson community – to reach out to the electoral candidates, and the candidates in your local riding, to call on them to prioritize Parkinson's. #PrioritizePD

It is time Canada recognized that healthcare outcomes need to be improved across the country in support of all Canadians living with and affected by Parkinson's. This is the opportunity to have your voice heard.

This Election Toolkit will provide you with a step-by-step guide on how to effectively engage with elected officials and candidates. Within the toolkit, you will be supplied with key information and data on Parkinson's and the current realities of healthcare in Canada, along with key strategic asks for this election.



STEP 1:

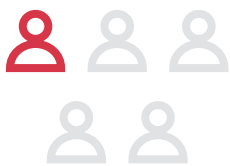
Get Prepared

An Overview to Parkinson's in Canada

Parkinson's is the fastest-growing neurological condition in Canada with more cases per capita than any other country. There are more than 100,000 people living with Parkinson's across the country and that number will grow rapidly by 30 people tomorrow and the day after that until we reach 200,000 Canadians within the next ten years. It is very important that we make our elected officials aware of the urgency of improving healthcare outcomes for people with Parkinson's.

Key Issues Around Parkinson's in Canada

1) Diagnosis wait times are too long in Canada and can have a serious impact on both the physical and mental wellbeing of those waiting to meet with a specialist.



One in five people living in Canada with Parkinson's wait **more than a year** to receive a formal diagnosis after first reporting their symptoms to a medical professional. Prolonged wait times to receive diagnosis have serious implications for an individual's quality of life and increases the likelihood for both physical and mental health deterioration. Like other serious conditions, the more time that passes without receiving proper care and medication can result in permanent impacts on health.

2) People living with Parkinson's need regular access to Parkinson's specialists, which currently happens too infrequently. Furthermore, Parkinson's specialists are typically located within major cities in Canada, posing geographical barriers for people living in rural parts of the country.

1 FOR EVERY
1,679

As of 2021, it is estimated that there is one Parkinson's specialist for every 1,679 people in Canada living with Parkinson's.

11

The national average wait time to meet with a Parkinson's specialist is 11 months, with some regions reporting wait times of more than two years. It is crucial for people with Parkinson's to get in with a Parkinson's specialist almost immediately after diagnosis to ensure that they, their care partners, and family are given the proper care and resources to manage Parkinson's symptoms.

3) A collaborative effort of healthcare services and medication to serve people with Parkinson's is essential, but in Canada access to these services and medications can be limited or unaffordable.



Nearly half of people in Canada living with Parkinson's and their care partners find it difficult to pay for medical expenses related to the treatment of Parkinson's, including essential services such as physiotherapy & exercise classes, occupational therapy, mental health services, and speech therapy.



STEP 2:

Identify and Find Out More About Your Member of Parliament/Candidates

To find your electoral district, your Member of Parliament, and other parliamentary responsibilities they hold, visit: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Members>.

To find the candidates in your riding and information on where to vote, visit <https://elections.ca>.

MPs often have additional parliamentary responsibilities or appointments, including being named a cabinet minister or member of a committee. These are of special interest as your MP may have a closer connection to an issue and may potentially be in a closer position of influence on decision making or advocacy. For example, parliamentary responsibilities relating to Health and Finance would be of special interest to the Parkinson Community..



STEP 3:

Get Involved

Join us for a Federal Election Webinar

Parkinson Canada is hosting a webinar on Wednesday, August 25th at 3:00PM EST. To register in advance, click [here](#).

If you are unable to attend the Parkinson Canada Federal Election Webinar, you can watch the recording at your convenience following the date here: [Parkinson.ca/election](https://www.parkinson.ca/election).

Engage with Your Member of Parliament/Candidates

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

1. Visit Parkinson Canada's election webpage at: [Parkinson.ca/election](https://www.parkinson.ca/election) to access further information and send a letter directly to your district's electoral candidates.
2. Connect with your MP, an electoral candidate, the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Finance through social media and use #PrioritizePD. (See some examples below)
3. Meet with your MP or candidates in-person or by phone to share your message.
4. Write a letter or email to your MP, an electoral candidate, the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Finance. See tips for writing a letter below.

Strategic Asks for Your Member of Parliament/Candidates

1. Request that the MP/Candidate show their support for what you have discussed by sharing out on social media a message emphasizing the importance of improving healthcare for people with Parkinson's. Ask them to use #PrioritizePD and #PriorisonsParkinson
2. Ask the MP/Candidate to learn more about Parkinson's. A great place for them to start is our website, or by reaching out to Parkinson Canada's Director of Public Affairs and Regional Partnerships, Amanda Stanton at Amanda.Stanton@Parkinson.ca.
3. Request that the MP/Candidate share what they have learned and believe around the need for improved healthcare outcomes for people with Parkinsons when discussing healthcare outcomes for Canadians with their party and in government.

Social Media Post Examples

- Improved healthcare support for people with Parkinson's is an important issue in my community, province, and across Canada, with over 100,000 people impacted and growing. #PrioritizePD #elxn44
- The national average wait time to see a specialist for diagnosis of Parkinson's in Canada is 11 months and in some regions the wait is over two years. I'm calling on the government to improve healthcare in Canada. #PrioritizePD #elxn44
- Over 100,000 Canadians are living with Parkinson's today and that number is expected to double by 2031. The time is now to ensure equitable, timely, and affordable access to care. #PrioritizePD #elxn44

- Parkinson's is the fastest-growing neurological condition in Canada with more cases per capita than any other country. Canada needs a national strategy to improve on healthcare for the Canadian Parkinson's community. #PrioritizePD #eln44
- Nearly half of people in Canada living with Parkinson's and care partners find it difficult to pay for medical expenses related to the treatment of Parkinson's. Canadians deserve equitable access to drug treatments, exercise, and other therapeutic options for multidisciplinary care. #PrioritizePD #eln44

LONGTERM ADVOCACY STRATEGY FOR PARKINSON'S

During this election, there is an immediate need to raise awareness of Parkinson's for political candidates. Beyond this effort, Parkinson Canada is working on a long-term plan for building a national strategy that will be designed to better understand the diverse healthcare realities of people living with Parkinson's in Canada, with the goal to advocate for a coordinated government response.

We are currently leading a series of roundtables, which are a foundational component to engaging voices across the country.

ROUNDTABLE SERIES

We are committed to raising the voice of people affected by Parkinson's through advocacy efforts focused on improving healthcare in Canada. No Matter What.

This series will discuss key issues surrounding the provincial and national healthcare systems for Parkinson's. It will bring together over 200 voices from the Canadian Parkinson's community to gather insight, clarity, and backing that will support Parkinson Canada's advocacy work.

The Parkinson Canada Roundtable Series will bring together thought leaders from across the country, including people living with Parkinson's, care partners, healthcare professionals, and community organizers. The roundtable findings will emphasize the crucial need for increased government support to improve on areas of greatest urgency for the Parkinson's community, including reducing wait times for diagnosis, increasing access to multidisciplinary care, and facilitating the development of a comprehensive model for holistic care in Canada.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION COLLABORATION

We are stronger together and Parkinson Canada stands united with Parkinson Society British Columbia, Parkinson Association of Alberta, U-Turn Parkinson's, Parkinson Society Southwestern Ontario, and Parkinson Society Newfoundland & Labrador for these roundtables and to expand our political advocacy efforts.

QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

If you have any questions or comments, with regards to the Election Toolkit, you can reach out to Parkinson Canada's Director of Public Affairs and Regional Partnerships, Amanda Stanton at Amanda.Stanton@Parkinson.ca.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Considerations When Interacting with Your Members of Parliament/Candidates

- MPs and candidates have very busy schedules as their time in the riding is limited due to their commitments during the election. For this reason, they are trying to meet with as many constituents as possible. Prepare yourself; expect to have around 20-30 minutes to meet with your MP.
- Meetings are not the only way to get time with an MP. Watch for local events that the MP is attending in your area. Check your local news and MP websites for updates on where they will be. MPs also often have local newsletters that you can sign up for through their website that will keep you updated on their activities.
- As a charitable organization, Parkinson Canada and all community Parkinson's organizations are non-partisan. When advocating on behalf of Parkinson Canada, please refrain from showing support or favour for one party over another. Always maintain fair and equitable treatment.

Template Agenda for Meeting with Elected Officials/Candidates

1. Introductions

- Share your connection to Parkinson's.
- Ask if they have a connection to Parkinson's.

2. Parkinson's in Canada & Request

- Share some key information and data on Parkinson's by picking 3–5 points to highlight.
- Request their commitment to make Parkinson's a priority and work to ensure that improved healthcare is seen as important.
- Make it personal—provide your 3–5 prepared points on why this is important you as it relates to your personal experience with Parkinson's.

3. Questions to ask your MP

- How do you and your team intend to improve the lives of Canadians living with Parkinson's?
- Can I count on you to make Parkinson's a priority?
- Will you share this support publicly by posting on social media with #PrioritizePD
- Will you write a letter to your electoral candidate, the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Finance requesting a Parkinson's to be urgently addressed as a healthcare priority?

4. Thank them for their time.

Sample Emails to Elected Officials/Candidates

1. Use this email template to request a meeting with your elected official.

Hello MP _____,

My name is _____. I am a resident in your riding of _____. I have been [living with Parkinson's disease for X years/month/caring for my_____ 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, 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 the Canadian Parkinson's community.

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

[Signed]

[Your Address]

2. Use this email template if you are unable to meet with your elected official but would like to share your story and request with them.

Hello MP _____,

My name is _____. I am a resident in your riding of _____. I have been [living with Parkinson's disease for X years/month/caring for my_____ 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, 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 the Canadian Parkinson's community.

I would like to ask you to consider the following questions:

How do you intend to improve the lives of Canadians living with Parkinson's in your role?

Can I count on you to commit to making Parkinson's a priority?

Will you write a letter to your electoral candidate, the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Finance requesting that Parkinson's be urgently addressed as a healthcare priority?

What advice or feedback do you have for us to have our request for a national strategy for improved healthcare move forward?

Thank you in advance for your response.

[Signed]

[Your Address]

Tips for Writing an Effective Letter or Email to a Candidate or Members of Parliament

House of Commons offices in Ottawa receive hundreds of letters from constituents each day. These guidelines will improve the effectiveness of your letter.

Address your letter correctly. Be sure you have the correct address and salutation in your letter.

Always start by writing to your local elected official or candidate. Elected officials are most interested in your concerns when they represent you.

Only address one issue per letter. Being concise on one specific topic will make for a quicker and more impactful 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 take action. 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 in their response.

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. Try to keep your letter as short as possible to ensure that your message is fully read. Elected officials receive many letters and it is possible that a longer letter may be skimmed.

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 that they represent. Make sure your MP knows how to reach you. You should also include your phone number if you feel comfortable doing so.

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

Follow up. Elected officials and candidates are busy and it can often take weeks for a response. If you find you have not received a response in an appropriate amount of time, follow up to confirm that they received your letter. This can also be done with a phone call.

In addition, when you do receive a response, you can also send follow-up letters to thank them for their stand or ask follow-up questions if they provided you with an unsatisfactory response. 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, and it can be an opportunity to forge an ongoing relationship.

Remember, no postage is required to mail a letter to your MP in their Ottawa Office.

When addressing correspondence to Federal Dignitaries, please reference the proper styles:

Dignitary	Salutation	Final Salutation	In Conversation
<p>Prime Minister of Canada</p> <p>The Right Honourable (full name), P.C., M.P. Prime Minister of Canada</p> <p>Langevin Block Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2</p> <p>Note: the term “Mr. Prime Minister” should not be used</p>	<p>Dear Prime Minister: or Prime Minister:</p>	<p>Yours sincerely,</p>	<p>“Prime Minister” first, then “Mr./Mrs./Ms./”</p>
<p>Canadian Ministry Cabinet ministers</p> <p>For a Member of the House of Commons:</p> <p>The Honourable (full name), P.C., M.P. Minister of _____</p> <p>House of Commons Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6</p> <p>Note: Members of the Ministry are members of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada and retain the title “Honourable” for life, using the initials P.C. after their name. The term “Mr. Minister” or “Madame Minister” should not be used.</p>	<p>Dear Minister: Dear Colleague: (between colleagues) Dear Minister of State: Dear Colleague: (between colleagues)</p>	<p>Yours sincerely,</p>	<p>“Minister” first, then “Mr./Mrs./Ms./ Miss (name)” “Minister of State” first, then “Mr./Mrs./Ms./ Miss (name)”</p>
<p>Senators</p> <p>The Honourable (full name), Senator</p> <p>The Senate Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A4</p> <p>Note: A senator who is a member of the Queen’s Privy Council is addressed as “Senator the Honourable (full name), P.C.” After a Senator retires, he/she retains the title “Honourable” for life but the salutation is “Dear Sir/ Madam” or “Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss (name)”.</p>	<p>Dear Senator (name):</p>	<p>Yours sincerely,</p>	<p>“Senator (name)”</p>
<p>Members of the House of Commons</p> <p>Mr. John Smith, M.P. or The Honourable John Smith, P.C., M.P.</p> <p>House of Commons Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6</p> <p>Note: The members of the House of Commons who are members of the Queen’s Privy Council retain the title “Honourable” for life and use the initials</p>	<p>Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss (name):</p>	<p>Yours sincerely,</p>	<p>“Mr./Mrs./Ms./ Miss (name)”</p>

For a full list of styles, including the ones above, please visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/protocol-guidelines-special-event/styles-address.html#a2>