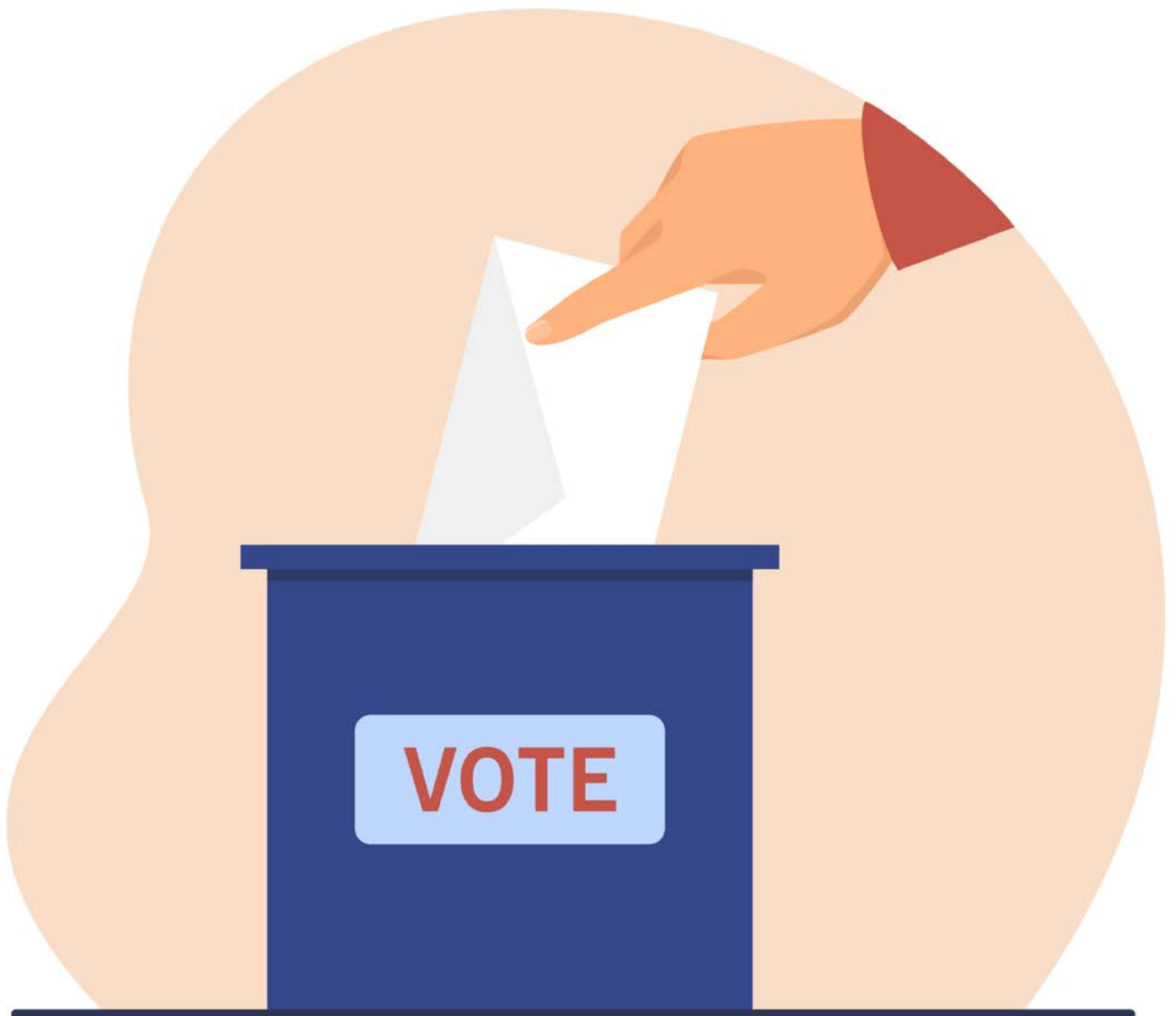


ONTARIO ELECTION TOOLKIT 2022



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2022 ONTARIO ELECTION TOOLKIT OVERVIEW

Ontarians are heading to the polls and in the lead up to this election we are asking you, the members of the Ontario Parkinson's community, to reach out to your electoral candidates and call on them to prioritize Parkinson's. It is time Ontario recognizes that the province's healthcare outcomes need improvement, and this is the opportunity to have your voice heard!

This toolkit provides you with a step-by-step guide on how to effectively engage with elected officials and candidates, some key information and data on Parkinson's and the current realities of healthcare in Ontario, and with some key strategic asks.



STEP 1:

Get Prepared

An overview of Parkinson's in Canada

Parkinson's disease has the fastest growing rates of death and disability compared to other neurological disorders such as dementias, MS, and stroke. It is estimated there are more than 100,000 people in Canada living with Parkinson's and that number will grow by about 30 people tomorrow and the day after, until we reach 50 new diagnoses per day within 10 years.

An overview of Parkinson's in Ontario

More than 46,000 of the 100,000 Canadians living with Parkinson's are in the province of Ontario. The provincial average wait time to meet with a Parkinson's specialist is 11 months, and it is estimated that there is only one Parkinson's specialist for every 1,379 people living with Parkinson's in Ontario. Most of the specialists are in major cities across the southern portion of the province. Similarly, many Parkinson-specific services are centralized to urban regions posing geographical access barriers to residents in northern or rural areas.

Many Ontarians living with Parkinson's are required to pay out of pocket for critical healthcare services. It is estimated more than 50 per cent of individuals pay out of pocket for exercise programs and physiotherapy, and 25 per cent of individuals report paying a portion of their medication costs out of pocket. Furthermore, more than 50 per cent of care partners in Ontario feel they do not have sufficient access to information or resources to properly care for the person with Parkinson's in their lives.

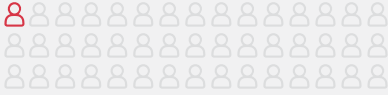
It is very important that we make our elected officials aware of the urgency of improving healthcare outcomes for people with Parkinson's and their care partners.



There are more than **46,000** people living with Parkinson's in Ontario.



The provincial average wait time to meet with a Parkinson's specialist is **11 months**.



There is **1** Parkinson's specialist for every **1,379** people with Parkinson's in the province.



54% of care partners in Ontario feel they do not have sufficient access to information or resources.



Over 50% of individuals pay out of pocket for exercise programs and physiotherapy.

Parkinson Canada Advocacy Roundtables

The 2021 Parkinson Canada Roundtable Series (www.parkinson.ca/advocacy) consisted of eight regional roundtables, including one in Ontario, and a national session. This effort brought together more than 150 voices from the Canadian Parkinson's community to gather understanding, insight, and clarity around healthcare realities and how to support Parkinson Canada's advocacy efforts. People living with Parkinson's, care partners, healthcare professionals, and regional Parkinson's organizations were invited to participate.

The Ontario Roundtable Report (www.parkinson.ca/election) summarizes the unique realities faced by the Ontario Parkinson's community and identifies key priorities to better improve their overall health and quality of life.

Key Priorities Around Parkinson's Healthcare Realities in Ontario:

1) Wait Times:

- The prolonged wait times to see a Parkinson's specialist and receive a diagnosis (11 month average and as long as two years) have serious implications for an individual's quality of life and increase the likelihood for both physical and mental health deterioration.

2) Model of Care:

- Integrated health care comprises a multidisciplinary, non-invasive approach involving mental health support, nutritional support, exercise/physiotherapy, and language or speech support that helps in the holistic well-being of people living with Parkinson's.
- Currently, there is no consistent model of care in Ontario.

3) Access to Care:

- Most Parkinson's specialists are in major cities across southern Ontario. Similarly, many Parkinson-specific services are centralized to urban regions, posing geographical access barriers to residents in northern or rural areas.
- Many individuals also experience financial barriers to care, having to pay out-of-pocket in some part for medication, speech therapy, physiotherapy, and exercise classes.

These priorities will provide a roadmap to the organization in developing our future advocacy work in supporting Ontarians affected by Parkinson's.



STEP 2:

Identify your Member of Provincial Parliament and Candidates

To find your electoral district, your Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP), their parliamentary roles, and more, visit: <https://voterinformationselections.on.ca/en/election/search>.

To find your riding's candidates, voting locations, how to register, and accessibility services available, please visit: www.elections.on.ca.

MPPs 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 MPP may have a closer connection to an issue and may potentially be in a better position of influence. For example, parliamentary responsibilities relating to health, finance, disability, or seniors would be of special interest to the Parkinson's Community.



STEP 3:

Get Involved

Engage with your MPP and Candidates

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

1. Visit www.parkinson.ca/election for further information and send a letter directly to your electoral candidates.
2. Connect with your MPP, electoral candidate, and key ministers through social media, using the **#PrioritizePD** hashtag. See some examples below.
3. Meet with your MPP or candidates in-person, virtually, or by phone to share your message.
4. Write a letter or email to your MPP, electoral candidate and key ministers. See templates and letter writing tips below.
5. Follow your MPP or candidate on social media and subscribe to their newsletters to familiarize yourself with their activities and priorities.

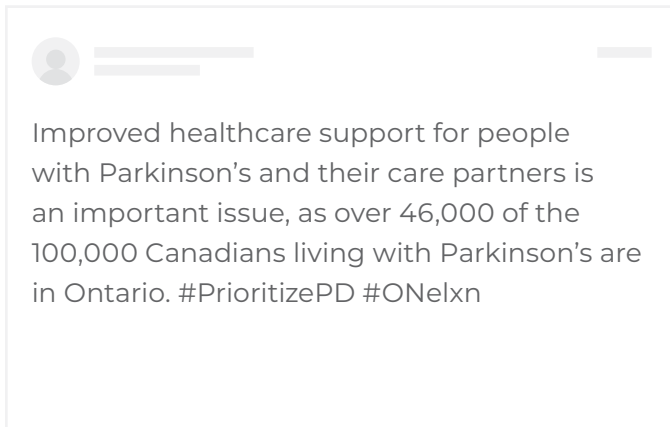
Strategic Asks for Your Member of Provincial Parliament/Candidates

The objective of the meetings is to build a relationship with the MPP or candidate while raising awareness about Parkinson's and to find areas of shared priorities.

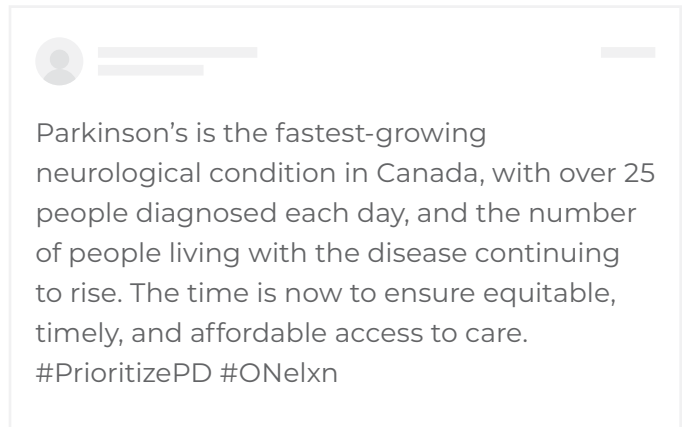
1. Request that the MPP/Candidate show their support for what you have discussed by sharing a message on social media emphasizing the importance of improving healthcare for Ontarians with Parkinson's, using the **#PrioritizePD** hashtag.
2. Ask the MPP/Candidate to learn more about Parkinson's. A great place for them to start is our website www.parkinson.ca or by emailing advocacy@parkinson.ca.
3. Request that the MPP/Candidate share what they have learned around the need for improved healthcare outcomes for Ontarians with Parkinson's with their party and in government.
4. Ask what their top priorities will be if elected and how can Parkinson Canada and you, as an Ambassador, help them accomplish these.
5. Ask what measures their party intends to take for Ontarians to have equitable access to care across the province.
6. Ask how their party intends to improve specialist wait times in Ontario.

SOCIAL MEDIA POST EXAMPLES

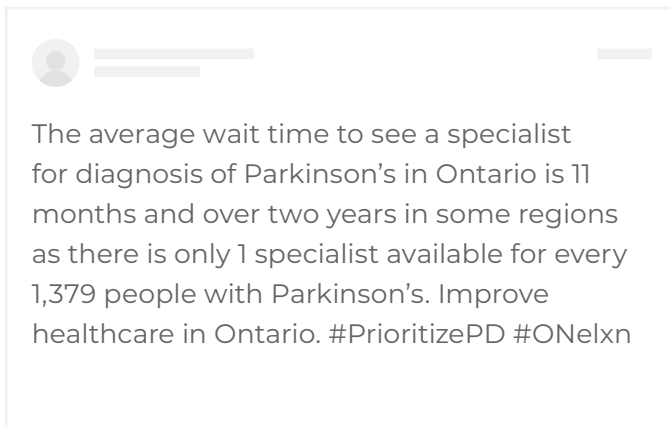
Facebook and LinkedIn



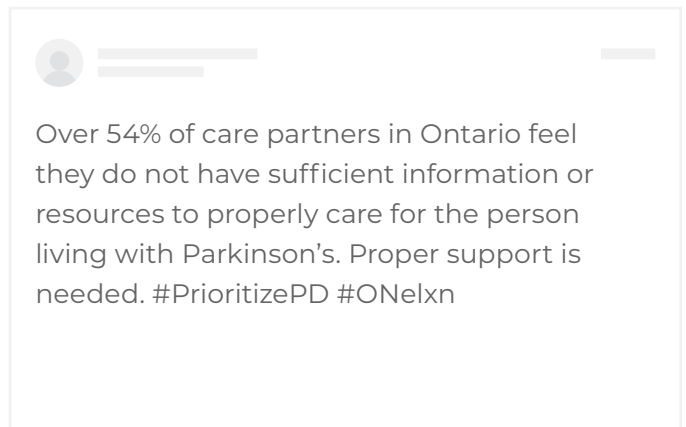
Improved healthcare support for people with Parkinson's and their care partners is an important issue, as over 46,000 of the 100,000 Canadians living with Parkinson's are in Ontario. #PrioritizePD #ONelxn



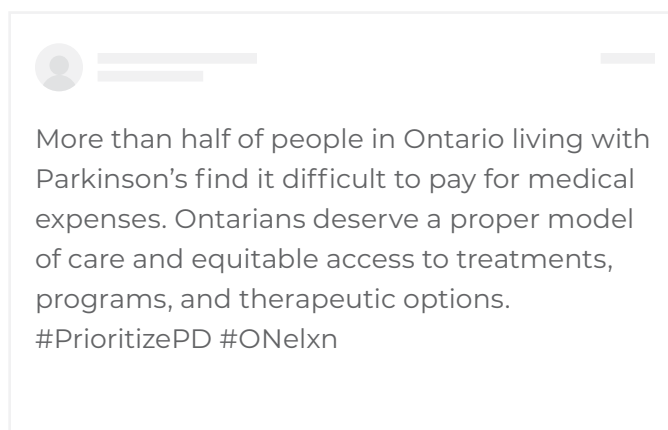
Parkinson's is the fastest-growing neurological condition in Canada, with over 25 people diagnosed each day, and the number of people living with the disease continuing to rise. The time is now to ensure equitable, timely, and affordable access to care. #PrioritizePD #ONelxn



The average wait time to see a specialist for diagnosis of Parkinson's in Ontario is 11 months and over two years in some regions as there is only 1 specialist available for every 1,379 people with Parkinson's. Improve healthcare in Ontario. #PrioritizePD #ONelxn

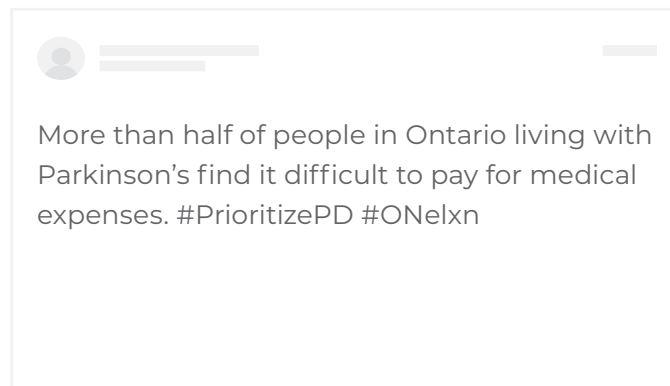
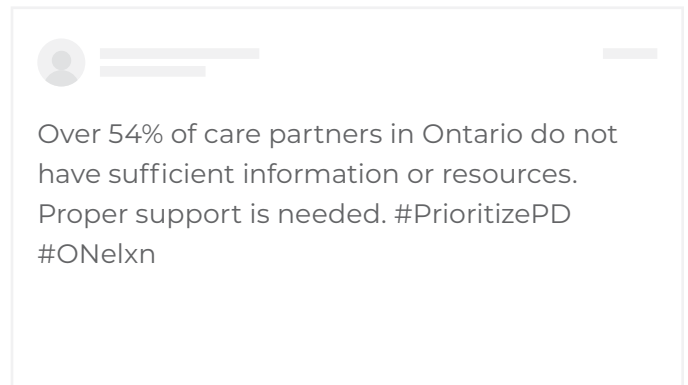
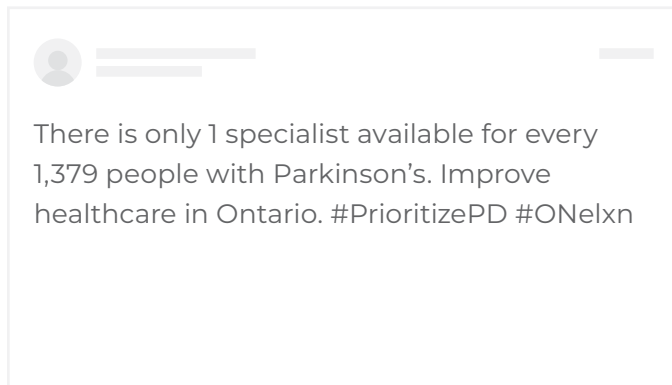
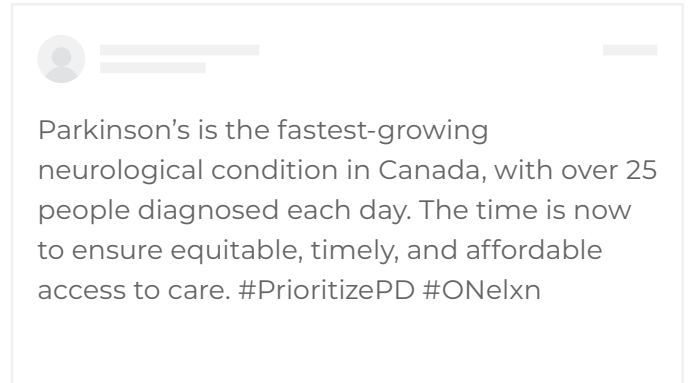
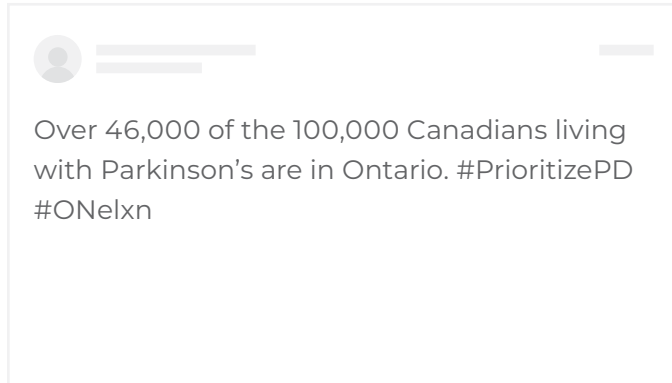


Over 54% of care partners in Ontario feel they do not have sufficient information or resources to properly care for the person living with Parkinson's. Proper support is needed. #PrioritizePD #ONelxn



More than half of people in Ontario living with Parkinson's find it difficult to pay for medical expenses. Ontarians deserve a proper model of care and equitable access to treatments, programs, and therapeutic options. #PrioritizePD #ONelxn

Twitter and Instagram Stories



Considerations When Interacting with Your MPPs/Candidates

1. MPPs and candidates are very busy during elections as they are meeting with as many constituents as possible. Be prepared and expect to have 15-30 minutes with the official.
2. Meetings are not the only way to get time with an MPP/Candidate. Check the news or the candidates' website for local events they will be attending. Sign up for their local newsletters to receive updates on their activities.
3. As a charitable organization, Parkinson Canada is nonpartisan. When advocating on our behalf, please refrain from showing support or favour for one party over another.

Template Agenda for Meeting with MPPs/Candidates

1. Introductions

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

2. Parkinson's in Ontario and Request

- Share key information and data on Parkinson's by highlighting some main points.
- Request their commitment to make Parkinson's a priority to ensure that improved healthcare 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 MPP/Candidates

- How do you and your team intend to improve the lives of Ontarians 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 the **#PrioritizePD** hashtag?
- Will you write a letter to your electoral candidate and key ministers requesting that Parkinson's be urgently addressed as a healthcare priority?

4. Thank them for their time and let them know you will follow up!

Don't forget to let us know how your meeting went at advocacy@parkinson.ca

Sample Emails to MPPs/Candidates

1. Use this email template for meeting requests:

Hello Minister/MPP _____,

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 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 Ontarians in the Parkinson's community.

Thank you in advance for your response. 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 requests with them:

Hello Minister/MPP _____,

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 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 the Parkinson's community.

I would like you to consider the following questions:

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

What measures does your party intend to take for Ontarians to have equitable access to care across the province?

How does your party intend to improve specialist wait times in Ontario?

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

Will you write a letter to your electoral candidate and key ministers 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 improved healthcare move forward?

Thank you in advance for your response.

[Signed]

[Your Address]

Tips for Writing an Effective Letter and Emails to MPPs/Candidates

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 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.

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 MPP/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. Elected officials and 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.



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

Dignitary	Salutation	In Conversation
<p>Premier or Cabinet Minister</p> <p>The Honorable (full name), Minister of _____/ Premier of Ontario</p> <p>Note: The Premier and/or Cabinet Minister does not keep the title of “The Honourable” after leaving office. A Premier will only retain the title of “The Honourable” for life if they are made a member of the Queen’s Privy Council by the federal government.</p>	<p>Dear Minister/Premier _____ (last name)</p>	<p>Minister/Premier_____, (last name)</p>
<p>Members of Provincial Parliament</p> <p>_____ (first and last name), MPP</p> <p>Or</p> <p>The Honorable _____ (first and last name), MPP</p> <p>Note: MPPs do not keep the title of “The Honourable” after leaving office. A Premier will only retain the title of “The Honourable” for life if they are made a member of the Queen’s Privy Council by the federal government.</p>	<p>Dear MPP/last name</p>	<p>MPP/last name</p>

ABOUT PARKINSON CANADA

People with Parkinson's are at the centre of everything we do. Our mission is to transform the lives of people living with Parkinson's.

Parkinson Canada funds critical research, provides information and support, increases awareness, and advocates for improved health care outcomes for people living with Parkinson's across Canada.

<https://www.parkinson.ca/>

