On or before October 19 Canadians go to the polls for the next federal election. This primer will help you extend your influence beyond the ballot box. Join the Canadian Nurses Association: Declare that seniors home health care must be an election issue.

How does CNA want federal candidates and parties to improve seniors health?
1. Common standards for home health care
2. More support to family caregivers
3. Better community- and home-based health promotion

Why home health care standards?
Canada’s home health care is a patchwork of public and private services. That means getting health care at home has more to do with where we live than what we need. In helping establish common standards across Canada by working with the provinces, territories and stakeholders — including CNA — federal parties could give Canadians equitable access to care.

Why more support for family caregivers?
Canadians who serve as caregivers for aging family members or friends are indispensable to the well-being of our seniors and our health-care system. More support would give them a hand up as they work to balance jobs and raise families.

Why healthy and active aging?
Preventive activities and programs can help seniors maintain or improve their health and reduce falls — the leading cause of seniors’ injury-related hospitalizations. Increasing balance and strength are among the most effective and low-cost ways to gain stability, manage chronic disease and get seniors more socially engaged.

Did you know?
More than 90% of Canadians say it’s important to be able to age at home with access to health care in a home setting.
14% of Canada’s population is 65 and older. By 2036, it’ll be 30%.
About 8 million Canadians provided some type of care to family or friends in 2011-2012.
Family caregivers contribute around $5 billion in unpaid labour each year to the health-care system.
Since 2008, the number of people receiving home care in Canada has risen by 55%.
One in six home health care recipients are seniors.
Not all home health care is alike. Canada has an uneven patchwork of public and private services.
Aging doesn’t make people sick — chronic diseases and frailty do.
More than three-quarters of seniors have at least one chronic disease, and some have several.
Falls alone cost the health system upwards of $2.8 billion each year.
Extend your influence beyond the ballot box

Remember: Your candidates are running for office to represent you. Reach out and talk to them about the issues you care about (or use our handy online Contact Candidates tool), whether these are in your own riding or the nation as a whole.

Here’s some tips to get you started.

1. **Know your stuff.** Prepare 2 or 3 key issues ahead of time. You never know when you’ll run into a candidate — at a neighbourhood event, grocery store or on your very own doorstep (during dinner, of course).

2. **Be concise and direct.** Prepare to put your ideas across in just a few minutes. You won’t always get a 30-minute meeting.

3. **Start a conversation.** Get candidates talking with open-ended questions. Asking if they support more assistance for caregivers may only get a resounding “yes.” Instead, ask how they and their party will assist caregivers.

4. **Get face time.** Contact your local campaign offices for an appointment with the candidate or their staff. Be persistent and follow-up if you don’t get an immediate response.

5. **Work the scene.** Check with your local riding association or campaign offices to find town halls, all-candidate meetings and other public events where you can raise questions.

Don’t forget: Use our #homeishealth hashtag on social media while you’re out and about!

**How to get candidates talking**

Get your candidate talking with “how” and “what” questions on CNA’s election goals.

**How will you and your party help establish standards to give all Canadians fair and equitable access to home health care?**

- What are you going to do to fix the gaps in the home health care system so that a senior in B.C. has the same basic level of care as a senior in New Brunswick?
- How will you and your party collaborate with the provinces and territories that deliver health care?

**How will you and your party secure more support for caregivers?**

- What are you going to do to help compensate family caregivers who pay out-of-pocket for prescriptions, groceries and transportation for aging relatives or lose wages for time taken off work?
- How will you help Canadians balance caregiving to seniors with raising families and maintaining careers?

**How will you nurture and enhance community- and home-based healthy and active aging programs that promote and protect good health?**

- What are you going to do to bring chronic disease prevention and management supports into seniors’ homes and communities?
- How will you support programs to keep seniors healthy and active?

**The candidate says health care isn’t the federal government’s responsibility**

Public opinion polls say Canadians want federal leadership in public health care. Plus, the federal government is responsible for the health care of veterans, aboriginal Canadians and others. Surely, these groups have seniors!

**The candidate isn’t well-versed on health care**

Direct him or her to cna-aiic.ca/election2015. The CNA website has lots of information about healthy aging and seniors care!

**The candidate doesn’t agree**

Do your best to share your perspective and experience. If they still won’t budge, move on to other candidates who are open to improving health care.

cna-aiic.ca/election2015 #homeishealth

Facebook:/cna.aiic  Twitter:/canadanurses  YouTube:/CNAVideos