



Registered Nurses'
Association of Ontario

L'Association des
infirmières et infirmiers
autorisés de l'Ontario

why

Health

matters:

Medicare

Access to care

Social determinants

Environmental determinants

Fiscal capacity

**FEDERAL
ELECTION
2015**

Electing a new federal government

Canadians head to the polls on Oct. 19. Voting is a privilege, and yet election campaigns don't always provide voters with the information they need to make their decision. So before Canadians cast their vote, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) has detailed the most important health issues for the upcoming federal election. Even though health is a provincial responsibility, the federal government has a vital role to play in keeping Canadians healthy, and RNAO wants each federal political party to put health first during the campaign. We encourage nurses and all Canadians to actively participate in the electoral process, including: running for office, getting to know candidates and key issues, attending events, and casting an informed vote.



Issues for registered nurses (RN), nurse practitioners (NP) and nursing students in the 2015 election:

Protect and strengthen Canada's universally accessible, publicly funded and not-for-profit health system

Improve access to quality, person-centred care

Tackle the social determinants of health

Protect the environment

Build fiscal capacity



Medicare

Canadians cherish the principle of equitable health care for all. Unfortunately, some key services are missing from our current system, including coverage for home care and a universal pharmacare program. Our country must also embrace health promotion and disease prevention and provide better access to primary care, instead of relying on hospitals. A hands-off approach to health care has resulted in damaging experimentation with

privatization (e.g. private for-profit clinics in several provinces and medical tourism in Ontario). The federal government has also walked away from the Health Accord, terminated the Health Council of Canada, reduced health transfers to provinces, and made cuts to the Interim Federal Health Program for refugee claimants.



RNAO URGES NURSES AND THE PUBLIC TO VOTE FOR CANDIDATES THAT WILL:

enforce the principles of the *Canada Health Act* and negotiate a new Health Accord including increased health transfers

expand our universally accessible, publicly funded, not-for-profit health-care system to include home care and pharmacare

reject efforts to privatize and/or commercialize the delivery of health care – including user fees, co-payments, means testing, and medical tourism

resurrect a commitment made by the First Ministers in 2003 to achieve 24/7 access to primary care delivered by interprofessional teams working to their full scope

reverse cuts made to the Interim Federal Health Program

reinstate the Health Council of Canada



Access to care

Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners

The Canadian population is aging, and the RN/NP workforce has not kept pace with the increased demands this has caused. Although the total nursing workforce has grown, this is largely the result of more registered or licensed practical nurses

being hired. RNs and NPs receive more education that allows them to care for patients who have complex or unpredictable conditions. With growing patient acuity and complexity, we need more RNs and NPs across the country to ensure better health outcomes for Canadians and health system cost-effectiveness.



RNAO URGES NURSES AND THE PUBLIC TO VOTE FOR CANDIDATES THAT WILL:

earmark funding to increase RN/NP-to-population ratios

End-of-life care

The Supreme Court of Canada's ruling to strike down the ban on assisted death has set the stage for an open dialogue about end-of-life care. The election represents an opportunity to discuss this important issue.

RNAO URGES NURSES AND THE PUBLIC TO VOTE FOR CANDIDATES THAT WILL:

create a national palliative care strategy that provides universally accessible services across the country

develop a principled regulatory framework to implement the Supreme Court of Canada's decision on assisted death



Social determinants of health

Nurses spend a great deal of their time helping people manage their illnesses. They would much rather help people stay healthy in the first place. The circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, and work all play a factor in their health. More and more people are

working in precarious jobs without access to reliable, affordable housing. The disparity between the rich and the poor is growing, and poverty rates remain high. This is not a recipe for good health.



Social determinants of health

RNAO URGES NURSES AND THE PUBLIC TO VOTE FOR CANDIDATES THAT WILL:

support affordable housing programs by increasing federal spending by \$2 billion annually

commit to a comprehensive national poverty reduction strategy, with targets, timelines and sufficient investments

adopt the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada to address the legacy of residential schools



Environmental determinants of health

People have the right to a clean environment. One of the defining environmental issues of our time is climate change. Its effects are being felt across Canada, including in the far north, with increased levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.




Environmental determinants of health

**RNAO URGES NURSES AND THE PUBLIC TO VOTE
FOR CANDIDATES THAT WILL:**

implement carbon pricing

decrease greenhouse gas emissions

**reduce toxic emissions, and ensure that people
are made aware of toxics in their homes,
workplaces and the products they consume**



Fiscal capacity

Nurses know that governments have to balance their budgets. But the federal government also has to make sure its policy and budget decisions meet the health needs of Canadians.

RNAO URGES NURSES AND THE PUBLIC TO VOTE FOR CANDIDATES THAT WILL:

ensure that all people and corporations pay their fair share of taxes

rely more heavily on green taxes that impose user fees on any activity that damages the environment



Fiscal capacity

These are the issues RNs, NPs and nursing students believe are worth talking about and taking action on.

Make sure your voice is heard.

Let candidates running for office know why health matters.

Vote for changes you believe will make Canada a healthier place and strengthen our publicly funded and not-for-profit health system.

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) is the professional association representing registered nurses, nurse practitioners and nursing students in Ontario. Since 1925, RNAO has advocated for healthy public policy, promoted excellence in nursing practice, increased nurses' contribution to shaping the health-care system, and influenced decisions that affect nurses and the public they serve.

RNAO.ca

Authorized by the
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