



FEDERAL
ELECTION
'19

**A PLATFORM
FOR A HEALTHY CANADA**



Electing a new federal government

The next federal election takes place on Oct. 21, 2019. Elections matter, especially when it comes to the health of Canadians. Health isn't just about health care. Our economic and social circumstances affect our health. The environment also affects our health. These are important issues at stake in the election. The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) is asking you to vote for your health.

RNAO has asked the leaders of the major federal parties for their views on the issues we believe matter most. We will post their responses as we receive them. We encourage you to take the time to ask candidates running for office in your riding whether these issues matter and what they're proposing to do about them.

Access to health care

Expand Medicare

1

Medicare is one of Canada's greatest achievements. We live longer, healthier lives because of it and it serves all of us when we need it. But the job is not done. Many essential health services are not covered by our system. It is time to change that.

RNAO urges nurses and the public to vote for candidates that commit to **expanding Canada's universal, publicly funded and not-for-profit health system through the provision of national pharmacare, dental care and home care services.**

2

All Canadians would have greater and more timely access to health care if our health system ensured that nurses were able to practise to their full scope. Canada ranks poorly by international standards when it comes to access for same day or next day appointments with a primary care provider. Nurses also play critical roles in transforming health policies and promoting health in communities. They are central to achieving universal health care and advancing a healthier Canada.

RNAO urges nurses and the public to vote for candidates that commit to **re-instating a national Chief Nursing Officer to provide advice on a broad range of issues including health policy and health human resource planning.**

Social determinants of health

Respond to opioid overdose crisis

3

In Canada, one person dies from opioid poisoning every two hours. And for the first time in 40 years, the life expectancy of Canadians has stalled due to an epidemic that has claimed the lives of nearly 12,000 Canadians over the past three years.

RNAO urges nurses and the public to vote for candidates that commit to responding to the opioid crisis by:

- **Ensuring that supervised consumption sites are available and funded where needed**
- **Decriminalizing activities related to personal drug use to enable supervised consumption sites to operate in similar fashion to other harm reduction programs**

Establish a new and respectful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians

4

Through the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and the courage of those who told their stories, we have learned much about our country and our history. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission stated it plainly: “For over a century, the central goals of Canada’s Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada.” There is a process of reconciliation that must now follow.

RNAO urges nurses and the public to vote for candidates that commit to re-establish a relationship with Canada’s Indigenous peoples in accordance with the principles of reconciliation set out by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. That includes:

- **Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation and ensuring that the laws of Canada are in harmony with the UN declaration**
- **Implementing the “calls to action” of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission**
- **Ensuring sufficient funding and**



resources to address the social, economic and health challenges identified by Indigenous communities, flowing from long-standing and ongoing discriminatory practices, including: access to health care; education; adequate housing; and, clean water

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And, in light of the deaths and disappearances of thousands of Indigenous women and girls in Canada,

RNAO urges nurses and the public to vote for candidates that commit to **implement the “Calls for Justice” of the National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

Make the right to housing a reality

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In June 2019, the right to housing was enshrined in the National Housing Strategy Act. However, the Parliamentary Budget Officer recently reported that the country's National Housing Strategy is actually reducing funding levels for households with the greatest housing needs. There are currently 1.7 million Canadian households in need of housing and more than 235,000 Canadians who are homeless.

RNAO urges nurses and the public to vote for candidates that commit to making the right to adequate housing a reality by providing federal leadership and investments that include:

- **Eliminating the number of households with core housing need**
- **Eliminating homelessness**

Environmental determinants of health

Develop and implement a comprehensive climate action plan

7

Unprecedented growth in greenhouse gas emissions is warming our planet at an alarming rate. As a result, Canadians are experiencing more severe weather, more flooding, more heat waves and more wild fires. Changes in our environment affect our health. It means more people are dying of heat-related illness. It affects those with respiratory and cardiovascular disease. And it has led to the spread of Lyme disease and West Nile virus.

RNAO urges nurses and the public to vote for candidates that commit to developing and implementing a comprehensive climate action plan that includes:

- **Establishing greenhouse gas emission targets consistent with current scientific evidence**
- **Strengthening the national carbon pricing regime**
- **Phasing out fossil fuel subsidies**
- **Investing in green infrastructure, including public transit and active transportation**

Fiscal capacity

Increase the federal share of public health expenditures

8

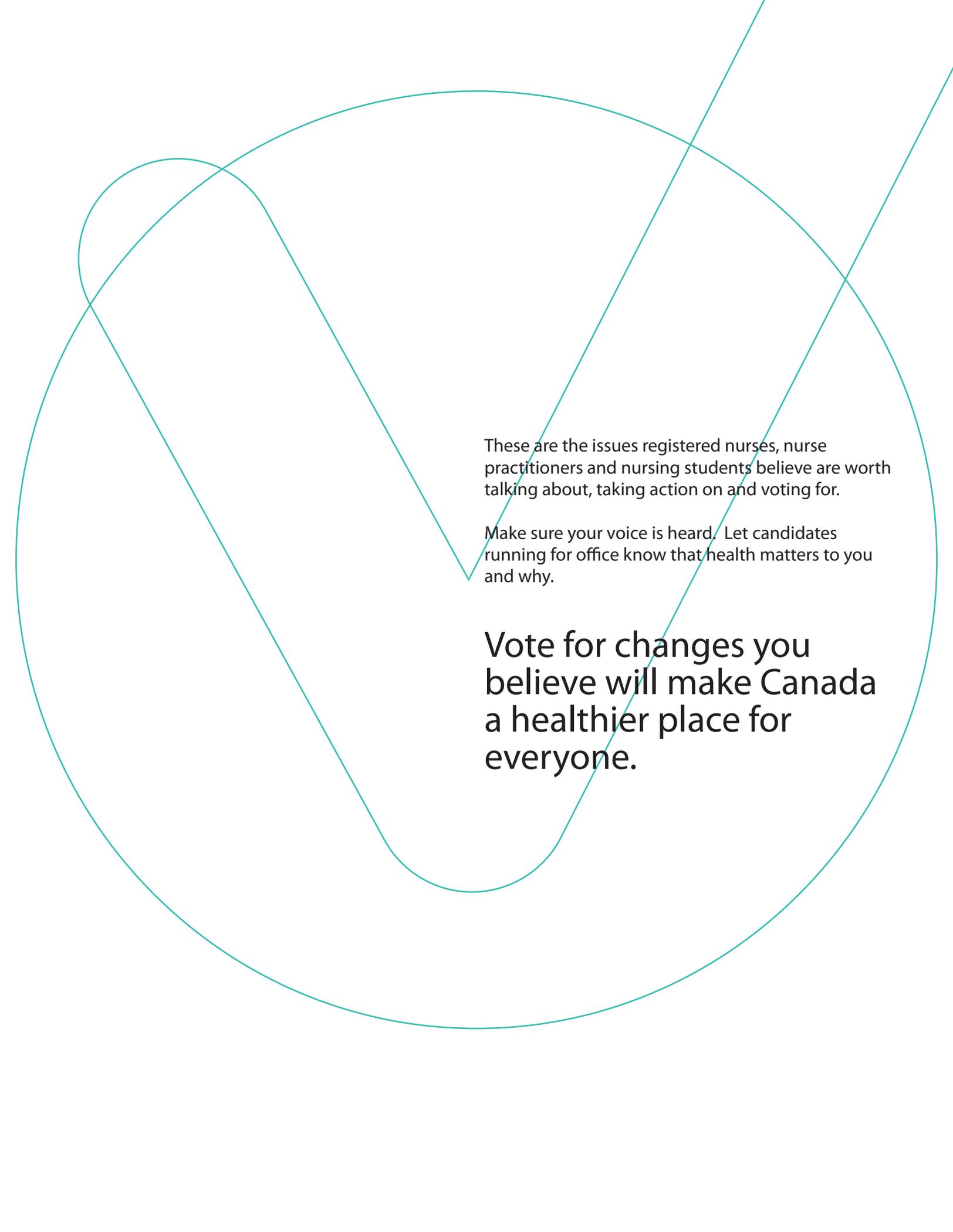
Provincial and territorial governments once paid less than two-thirds of our public health-care costs. Now, they pay over three-quarters of the cost.

RNAO urges nurses and the public to vote for candidates that commit to increasing the federal share of total health-care expenditures

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While the federal share of health-care costs have been decreasing, the federal government has been cutting corporate tax rates. Since 2000, the federal corporate tax rate has been cut from 28 per cent to 15 per cent. Over this same time period, there has been no increase in corporate investment but payments to shareholders through dividends and share buybacks have increased from \$76 to \$281 billion per year. In addition to that lost tax revenue, the federal government loses billions every year in tax evasion and tax avoidance.

RNAO urges nurses and the public to vote for candidates that commit to ensuring corporations and individuals pay their fair share of taxes



These are the issues registered nurses, nurse practitioners and nursing students believe are worth talking about, taking action on and voting for.

Make sure your voice is heard. Let candidates running for office know that health matters to you and why.

Vote for changes you believe will make Canada a healthier place for everyone.

Who we are

We represent the nursing profession in Ontario, speaking out for nursing and speaking out for health.

Our mission is to pursue healthy public policy and to promote the full participation of registered nurses and nurse practitioners in shaping and delivering health services now and in the future. We believe health is a resource for everyday living and health care a universal human right.

Respecting human dignity, we are a community committed to diversity, inclusivity, democracy and voluntarism. We make leadership our mandate, working with nurses, the public, health-care providers and governments to advance individual and collective health.

