



AdvantAge  
Ontario

Advancing Senior Care

# Protecting Canadian Seniors – Building a Care System that Supports and Safeguards Our Loved Ones

## Recommendations for Federal Political Parties

The world is changing rapidly before our eyes. Every day seems to bring new developments that perpetuate economic uncertainty and the feeling of instability. As political parties lay out their plans to protect and build Canada, one voter group needs to be front and centre – our seniors.

Seniors are our parents, our grandparents, our uncles and our aunts. They have worked their whole lives to help build Canada. Most seniors live on fixed incomes, and in the face of economic uncertainty, market instability and rising costs of living, Canada must ensure its seniors are protected and that we build a seniors' care system for the 21st century.

Canada's seniors' population is expanding at a rapid rate. In Ontario alone, the number of seniors is projected to grow from 2.8 million in 2022 to 4.4 million by 2046<sup>1</sup>. This is a societal change that requires the focus and attention of our political leaders.

AdvantAge Ontario, the trusted voice of the non-profit seniors' care sector for over 100 years, calls on all federal political parties to ensure seniors aren't left behind during this election campaign by committing to the following bold ideas to support them.

### **1. Protect Seniors' Care from the Impact of American Tariffs with Time-Limited Financial Transfers**

While much is still unknown about how the current trade dispute will end, the potential impacts could be significant on seniors' care providers such as long-term care homes, community support services and supportive housing providers. The cost of food, consumer goods, transportation, building repairs and new capital construction could all go up dramatically, which could have a devastating impact on services to seniors unless we act now.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-population-projections>



Political parties should protect Canada's system of seniors' care by committing to introduce time-limited financial transfers to provinces to support providers across the country.

## 2. Strengthen Canada's Seniors' Care System by Providing Dedicated and Enhanced Supports

Despite the nation's rapidly growing seniors population, Canada does not have the seniors' care system in place to properly care for our loved ones in the way they deserve.

Home and community care, long-term care and supportive housing are all underfunded. As a result, family caregivers are left to shoulder the bulk of the health care supports seniors should be getting elsewhere. It is no surprise that caregiver burnout is at an all-time high.

We have the opportunity to do better. Canada should invest to bolster its seniors' care system by providing dedicated and enhanced funding transfers to provinces for long-term care, home and community care, as well as supportive housing.

## 3. Support More Seniors by Growing Canada's Seniors' Care Workforce and Cutting Red Tape

Canada's system of seniors' care is built upon the workforce that supports it. But there are many challenges to retaining and attracting staff. The dedicated staff who help care for our loved ones deserve to be paid a fair wage, and barriers must be removed to attract more talented international health care professionals to our shores.

To build the workforce we need to care for our loved ones, Canada should provide dedicated funding to the provinces to increase wages for all front-line and administrative staff who care for seniors, as part of the dedicated transfer outlined above. Additionally, Canada should cut red tape that inhibits long-term care homes from hiring internationally educated health care professionals.

## 4. Ensure Seniors Have Safe Places to Live by Building More Seniors' Housing

Few things are more important to seniors than a safe and supportive home. Housing options for seniors need to keep pace with the rapid expansion of the nation's seniors population.

Canada should create thousands of additional spaces in the community for seniors to age in place by increasing supportive housing for frail seniors by 12,000 units.

Additionally, Canada should utilize the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund, the Canada Infrastructure Fund, and the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation to help build new and rebuild existing not-for-profit long-term care homes in Ontario and across Canada

## 5. Protect Seniors Now and in the Future by Creating an Independent Seniors Advocate

As the world evolves, so too will the issues that face Canada's seniors. But many seniors don't have the ability to make their needs known. Canada must ensure its seniors have a national voice to highlight the challenges that face them now and in the future.

Canada should establish an independent National Seniors Advocate who can shine a light on issues facing seniors and provide expert, non-partisan advice on what the government can do to ensure seniors are always protected. This new role will provide concrete, evidence-based guidance on how to support and protect our seniors as they age.

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This federal election, the decisions we make, and the actions we take as a country after it will define us for a generation. Let's make sure that building a seniors' care system we can all be proud of is one of those good and necessary decisions.



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For more than 100 years, AdvantAge Ontario has been the voice of not-for-profit seniors' care in Ontario. We represent more than 500 providers of long-term care, seniors' housing, supportive housing and community service agencies, including 98 per cent of all municipal long-term care homes and 86 per cent of all not-for-profit long-term care homes.

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