

Société
Alzheimer
Society

2018 ELECTION TOOLKIT

A resource guide for how you can meaningfully engage with party candidates and canvassers to take Action for Dementia this election

Take Action for Dementia



ONTARIO IS HEADING TO THE POLLS: JUNE 7, 2018

This toolkit has been developed to help arm our stakeholders and advocates with information and tools to engage with political parties and candidates on issues relating to dementia as the 2018 Election campaigning gets underway. Elections provide a meaningful opportunity for individuals and groups to engage communities and to ensure their values, priorities and interests are being heard by parties and candidates running for office.

Much progress has been made in elevating the status of dementia as a government and public policy priority. However, with already strained health and social care budgets, government will continue to be challenged to balance budgets and to meet the needs of the many competing priorities.

We need as many people as are able to take Action for Dementia to help us make sure that every party, candidate and elected representative knows the importance and value of continued commitment to the care and support of people living with dementia and their care partners.

Engaging in conversation with parties and candidates prior to the election will help to open dialogue and build a foundation for working together with government, opposition parties, and elected representatives and their staffs after the election is concluded.

The Alzheimer Society approach is *nonpartisan* meaning that we provide information about election topics and issues but do not favour or criticize a specific political party or candidate. Rather, we aim to foster open discussions and dialogue about issues important to our stakeholders and to the communities we serve.

Many elected representatives from all parties have already demonstrated their support in helping to make dementia a top government priority.

YOU CAN HELP!

There are some simple ways that you can get involved and engage with local representatives and candidates this election season:

- **Attend a town hall** to hear from candidates and ask questions about where they stand on issues relating to dementia.
- **Ask for a meeting** with your local candidates by calling, emailing or sending a letter to their constituency or campaign office. See Appendix A for some helpful messaging.
- **Post/share social media** on dementia issues and priorities.
- **Share stories, questions and experiences** directly with candidates by sending a letter to their campaign office or team.
- **Ask questions** about where a candidate/party stands on issues relating to dementia when candidates and/or canvassers come to your door.

WHAT'S IN THE KIT

The Alzheimer Society has prepared some tools and resources to help you take action for dementia this election season. Included in this toolkit you will find:

1. **Alzheimer Society election priorities** and how we arrived at them.
2. **Sample questions** to ask canvassers and candidates to find out where they stand on dementia issues and priorities.
3. **Sample social media posts** to help engage your friends, family and networks on Facebook and/or Twitter in conversations about dementia this election season.

2018 ELECTION PRIORITIES

The Alzheimer Society has been a key stakeholder in the development of Ontario's Dementia Strategy. As such, we participated in many of the consultations, including town halls and roundtable sessions, conducted around the province between fall 2015-16. During these consultations we heard directly from 100's of people living with dementia and their care partners on the issues that matter most, including:

- How care partners want to provide care to their friends or family who are living with dementia, but they're struggling and need to be supported in this role
- How challenging it is to get an accurate diagnosis and once diagnosed, how confusing and difficult it is to navigate Ontario's health and community care systems

These consultations resulted in the development of an Ontario Dementia Strategy, which was matched with a commitment from government to invest \$101 million over three years toward the implementation of strategy initiatives. Dementia Strategy investments are already making a difference for Ontarians faced with a dementia diagnosis, but without continued fiscal commitments from government, these critical supports will fail to be delivered.

Priorities the Alzheimer Societies are advocating for:

The Alzheimer Society calls on all parties to commit to making dementia a priority this election.

Commitment to funding \$101M for Ontario's dementia strategy by 2020 and continued growth long-term is critical to ensure people living with dementia and their care partners have the supports and services they need to live well, now and in the future.

Key investments include:

1. Respite—Supports that Work for Care Partners

Greater access to respite and high-quality day programming that offers choice and is flexible and responsive to the unique needs and circumstances of the care partner and the person living with dementia is vital.

2. First Link®—The Care You Need, When You Need It

Invest in First Link®, an Alzheimer Society program that connects people living with dementia and care partners to the support and resources they need as soon as possible after diagnosis. At least 46 new First Link Care Navigators by 2020 will:

- Enhance quality of life for people living with dementia
- Improve care partner capacity and well-being
- Strengthen linkages between primary care and community supports & services

***A more detailed background of these priorities is included as an Appendix B.**

CANVASER QUESTIONS

Attending a local town hall or when canvassers come to your door can be a great opportunity to ask where a party or candidate stands on the issues that matter to you. To help you to find out where your candidates stand on issues relating to dementia, we've developed a few facts and sample questions that you can use to engage representatives in conversation on dementia.

- Q:** *There are more than 228,000 Ontarians living with dementia. Do you consider dementia to be a top health care priority on which our elected representatives must act?*
- Q:** *Care partners to people living with dementia provide 75% more care than other unpaid care partners and experience 20% greater stress. If elected, will [you/your candidate] advocate for and support continued future investments in education, respite and dementia day programs, and transportation services to better meet the needs of people living with dementia, their care partners, and their families?*
- Q:** *Early intervention and support after receiving a diagnosis of dementia are vital—First Link connects people to the supports and services they need. If elected, will you support investments to the vital service that First Link provides to ensure people get the support and connection to services they need, year-over-year?*

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media, such as Facebook or Twitter, can be an incredibly useful tool to share your ideas and priorities with friends, family and even your MPP or candidates this election. To help you engage your social media networks on issues of dementia, we've developed a few simple posts that you can use on your own social media to get people thinking and talking about the issues.



More than 228,000 Ontarians are living with dementia. I want to see enhanced care and supports for dementia be made a priority this election! Join me: [URL]

Join me and stand up for Ontarians living with dementia. Dementia needs to be a priority for Ontario's 2018 election. Find out what you can do: [URL]

Join us and spread the word: People living with dementia, their care partners and families need enhanced support to live well in the community. Help make dementia a priority this election: [URL]



Caring for a friend or family member living with dementia is an important job. Let's make sure care partners are a priority this election! Learn what you can do: [URL]

Let's make sure people living with dementia and their care partners get the help they need. Help make dementia a priority this election at: [URL]

People with dementia and care partners deserve to live with dignity. Let's make sure dementia is a priority in the 2018 Ontario election! You can help, visit: [URL]

NEW ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

There are new electoral districts (ridings) this election. Ontario currently has 107 electoral districts, which will increase to 124 for the June 7 general election changing the boundaries of several current ridings. To confirm the electoral district in which you will be casting your vote, visit: <https://voterinformationservice.elections.on.ca/en/election/search>

LEARN MORE

To learn more about how people like you, with the Alzheimer Societies of Ontario, have already taken action to make sure people living with dementia and their care partners get the support and services they need, please visit: www.actionfordementia.ca

APPENDIX A: Messaging on the Dementia Strategy for Meetings with Individual Party Candidates

If you feel comfortable, you may want to ask candidates running in your riding for a one-on-one meeting to discuss the importance of making dementia a priority this election. If you do, we've prepared a couple bullets that you may find helpful to frame your conversation with party candidates.

Meeting with a Liberal candidate

- You can offer your thanks to the candidate for the party's work in developing the Ontario Dementia Strategy and for their commitment to fund its implementation with \$101M over three years (2017-2020).
- Emphasize that, while this is a major step in the right direction, funding for the supports and services people need to live well with dementia not only needs to continue into the future but grow.

Meeting with a candidate of another party (PC, NDP, Green)

- The people of Ontario have called on government for increased support, services and care for people living with dementia and their care partners—Ontarians want and need an Ontario Dementia Strategy.
- Supporting people living with dementia and care partner needs must be a top government priority—funding for the supports and services people living with dementia and care partners rely on must not only continue into the future but grow.

Speaking with a member of the NDP party?

- You may also want to acknowledge and thank NDP members for their party's platform commitment to invest \$100 million in Ontario's dementia strategy.

APPENDIX B: Detailed Backgrounder on Alzheimer Society Priorities

DEMENTIA – SOLUTIONS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Alzheimer Society is dedicated to improving the quality of life for Ontarians living with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. We are striving for an Ontario where people living with dementia and their care partners have access to the resources, services, and care they need and are supported to live well.

The Alzheimer Society provides information, education and support to people living with dementia and their care partners across the province. We have helped to engage thousands of Ontarians who have called on government to better support families affected by dementia. Last spring, those calls were answered with an investment of \$101 million over three years as part of the 2017 Ontario Budget for the implementation of an Ontario Dementia Strategy. This investment needs to continue for the long-term.

ABOUT DEMENTIA

Dementia is a general term that refers to a set of symptoms caused by disorders affecting the brain. Symptoms may include memory loss and difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or language, sometimes severe enough to reduce a person’s ability to perform everyday activities. Dementia is progressive, meaning the symptoms will get worse over time.

Ontario’s population is aging. While dementia is not a part of normal aging, the risk of developing dementia increases as people age. By 2020, it is estimated that approximately 250,000 Ontarians will be living with dementia. By 2036, this number is expected to reach 466,000. The economic burden is estimated at nearly \$325 billion over the next 30 years. Dementia affects a person’s whole life and the whole family, and that requires an array of solutions to allow those impacted to live with purpose and dignity.

THE NEED FOR SOLUTIONS

It is clear: Ontarians living with dementia want to live with purpose and dignity and to remain in their homes and communities for as long as possible. Care partners want to provide care, but face stress and burnout – they need support to carry on. With adequate supports, services and options, this can happen. But as our health system faces ever-growing demand, it will require investment into solutions.

The Alzheimer Society believes that the following solutions are needed to address some of the most critical concerns facing Ontario families impacted by dementia- now and for the future.

1. RESPITE—SUPPORTS THAT WORK FOR CARE PARTNERS

We recommend that respite care be enhanced across the province by developing a Respite Strategy to ensure every Ontario care partner has access to high quality respite care including extended day programming throughout the province and more flexible/self-directed respite options.

Today, more Ontarians are receiving care at home. One in five Ontarians provide unpaid care to a family member—a number that is growing. Caring for someone living with dementia is especially challenging. Care partners to someone living with dementia provide 75 per cent more care hours than care partners for other chronic conditions and experience 20 percent greater stress. Services that supplement this care are essential to enable people to carry on.

Gains have been made to better recognize and support the critical role that informal care partners play. We must ensure that caring for care partners remains a top priority in government by enhancing these efforts.

Such enhancements should include Ontario-wide access to extended and flexible day program options, self-directed care options, or financial benefits and incentives for care partners.

2. FIRST LINK—THE CARE YOU NEED, WHEN YOU NEED IT

We recommend enhanced investment into for First Link® to ensure that all Ontarians diagnosed with dementia and their care partners are connected to the supports and resources they need as early as possible.

Dementia can be better managed when it is detected early and when people have immediate access to the supports and resources that will empower them to live well. Dementia is an incredibly complex condition. Families impacted by dementia need immediate access to ongoing support and care coordination to help them navigate smoothly through each stage of the condition in what is often a confusing and complex health care system.

In collaboration with partners in primary care (including memory clinics) and across the health care and community services sector, local Alzheimer Societies offer First Link® to proactively connect people diagnosed with dementia and their care partners to the services, supports and information that families need. To keep pace with the estimated growth of 10,000 new dementia cases each year in Ontario, investment into First Link® will be critical to ensure that referrals to the Alzheimer Society are maximized, and that families can navigate the system, have well-coordinated care, and access the supports they need when they need them.

Primary care presents the best, most widely-accessible opportunity to ensure people get accurately diagnosed and connected to the right resources. Primary care memory clinics have helped to advance this area, but greater capacity and training is required to make this happen consistently across the province.

APPENDIX C: MPP Participation at the Alzheimer Societies of Ontario Action for Dementia Day at Queen's Park

When speaking with candidates or their campaign staff, it is sometimes helpful to be able to draw on examples of when and how they have been involved on the issues that matter to you. The following is a list of current MPPs who participated in the Alzheimer Societies of Ontario Action for Dementia Day at Queen's Park on September 27th, 2017, through one-on-one meetings with Alzheimer Society stakeholders or by attending our reception.

Please note: this list is not meant to be exhaustive or wholly indicative of an MPPs commitment to people living with dementia or care partners. There are a variety of reasons that MPPs may have been unable to participate in this day and many MPPs have demonstrated their support for dementia as a priority in other ways.

MPP's by name and riding

Amrit Mangat, Mississauga—Brampton South

Ann Hoggarth, Barrie

Arthur Potts, Beaches—East York

Bill Mauro, Thunder Bay—Atikokan

Bill Walker, Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound

Cristina Martins, Davenport

Daiene Vernile, Kitchener Centre

David Zimmer, Willowdale

Dipika Damerla, Mississauga East—Cooksville

Ernie Hardeman, Oxford

Granville Anderson, Durham

Helena Jaczek, Oak Ridges—Markham

Jeff Leal, Peterborough

Jeff Yurek, Elgin—Middlesex—London

Jim Bradley, St. Catharines

Jim McDonnell, Stormont—Dundas—South

Glengarry

Joe Dickson, Ajax—Pickering

John Fraser, Ottawa South

John Vanthof, Timiskaming--Cochrane

John Yakabuski, Renfrew—Nipissing—

Pembroke

Julia Munro, York-Simcoe

Laura Albanese, York South—Weston

Laurie Scott, Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes--

Brock

Lisa Gretzky, Windsor West

Lorne Coe, Whitby—Oshawa

Marie-France Lalonde, Ottawa—Orleans

Michael Harris, Kitchener—Conestoga

Michael Mantha, Algoma—Manitoulin

Mike Colle, Eglinton—Lawrence

Monique Taylor, Hamilton Mountain

Nathalie Des Rosiers, Ottawa—Vanier

Norm Miller, Parry Sound—Muskoka

Randy Pettapiece, Perth—Wellington

Raymond Sung Joon Cho, Scarborough—Rouge
River

Robert Bailey, Sarnia—Lambton

Ross Romano, Sault Ste. Marie

Sam Oosterhoff, Niagara West—Glanbrook

Soo Wong, Scarborough—Agincourt

Sophie Kiwala, Kingston and the Islands

Steve Clark, Leeds—Grenville

Sylvia Jones, Dufferin—Caledon

Taras Natyshak, Essex

Ted Arnott, Wellington—Halton Hills

Teresa J. Armstrong, London—Fanshaw

Toby Barrett, Haldimand—Norfolk

Todd Smith, Prince Edward--Hastings

Victor Fedeli, Nipissing

Wayne Gates, Niagara Falls

Yvan Baker, Etobicoke Centre