A Unified Voice
Advocating for Older Adults

Healthy Aging Alberta

This resource is meant to be a tool for you to ask questions to representatives at all levels of Government and Leadership.

A candidate on your doorstep provides a unique opportunity to engage one-on-one with your potential government representative. Sometimes it can be uncomfortable, but it's a chance to highlight the issues that concern you, your family, and your community.

Still, questions and key points can be difficult to remember when you open your front door to a friendly stranger, asking you to vote for them. To help keep seniors' services top of mind, we've developed a list of questions you can ask, or, perhaps this list will help you come up with your own.

Read it, print it, and place it close to your front door, so when you hear someone at your doorstep, you'll be ready. Together, we can all pitch in to ensure our elected representatives know the importance of community-based seniors' services for a thriving Alberta.

Other Ways You Can Help:

Call a radio talk show and talk about the importance of the community-based seniors serving sector for you or your family.

- Send a letter to the newspaper and/or your local community newsletters.
- Attend candidate forums and ask the questions listed on the back of this page.
- Share messages about the importance of the sector on social media and use #AlbertaSeniors.
- Talk to your neighbours. If everyone talks to two people, we can triple our reach.

Questions to ask

Q1: What is your stance on the importance of community-based services for older adults in *(insert your area)* **and Alberta, and how will you prioritize funding and support for this sector? Does your party/candidate consider it a priority to support older adults to age in community?**

- Only 5-10% of older adults live in care facilities. Most older adults want to age at home as long as possible.
- Community-based seniors serving (CBSS) organizations are typically non-profits such as seniors' recreation centres, community organizations, and municipal bodies which provide incredibly cost-effective services that preserve the dignity and independence of older adults. They are often run by volunteers or staff with deep roots in the communities they serve.
- The sector provides many small and large acts of support, such as giving rides, providing meals, recreation and volunteer opportunities, connecting people to community supports and affordable housing, and engaging people to reduce isolation and improve their mental health.

Q2: What measures will you put in place to improve working conditions and support the workforce of the community-based seniors serving sector, given the increasing burnout among staff and volunteers and high turnover rates?

Q3: Tell a story of your own experience with community-based seniors' services, and how your life is improved by this work

Q4: With Alberta's older adult population expected to double within the next two decades, one in five Albertans will be over 65 by 2046. How will you ensure that there are supports for older adults and community-based organizations to meet the growing demand?

- The longer older Albertans are active in their community, the more society benefits. Older adults are the top volunteers, donors, and most politically active citizens in our communities.

Q5: 24% of Canadian older adults are family caregivers, contributing $11 billion of unpaid care each year in Alberta. How will you support these vital caregivers?

Q6: Did you know that by investing in preventative community-based seniors' services, the need for expensive emergency medical care and institutional care can be reduced? How will you address the need for these services in community?

- 75% of health outcomes for older adults are determined by non-medical factors, or social determinants of health, such as food security, quality of social relationships, and access to transportation and system navigation, among many others.
- Alberta's approach to healthcare has been primarily reactive with less focus and fewer resources devoted to prevention.