



A HEALTHIER FUTURE FOR AGING IN SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan will head to the polls by Oct. 28. During this election, Federal Retirees is calling on the province's next government to improve older adult care and create a healthier future for aging in Saskatchewan.

This work is more important now than ever before. According to the 2021 Census — the most recent year for which this data is available — 17.5 per cent of the Saskatchewan population is aged 65 or older. By 2030, adults aged 65 or older will make up 23 per cent of Canada's population and number over 9.5 million.

Older adults deserve to age with dignity, and it's time to create a healthier future for aging in Saskatchewan.

This provincial election is our chance to do that.

KEY MESSAGES

During this election, Federal Retirees is calling for Saskatchewan's next provincial government to:

- Appoint an independent and effective seniors advocate for the province of Saskatchewan.
- Develop and implement a Saskatchewan seniors strategy.
- Enable aging in place.
- Enforce mandatory standards for long-term care.

ABOUT FEDERAL RETIREES

The National Association of Federal Retirees (Federal Retirees) is the largest national advocacy organization representing active and retired members of the federal public service, Canadian Armed Forces, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and retired federally appointed judges, as well as their partners and survivors. With more than 170,000 members from coast to coast to coast, including 4,000 in Saskatchewan, Federal Retirees has advocated for improvements to the financial security, health and well-being of our members and all Canadians since 1963.

THE ISSUES

Appoint an independent and effective seniors advocate for the province of Saskatchewan.

Appointing an independent seniors advocate who reports to the legislature will ensure crucial support to seniors and their families. This role would be responsible for investigating complaints and concerns, monitoring older adults' well-being and rights and providing non-partisan policy advice to Saskatchewan's government.

Plus, an independent seniors advocate can lead development and implementation of a Saskatchewan seniors strategy.

Seniors strategies identify initiatives to tackle ageism and social isolation, as well as ensuring older adults are autonomous, financially secure, and have affordable housing and transportation, high-quality health care services and meaningful community connections.

To learn more about the role of an independent seniors' advocate, visit [The Case for Seniors Advocates](#).

Saskatchewan's next government must commit to appointing an effective, independent seniors advocate. Appointing an independent seniors advocate who reports to the legislature will ensure crucial support to seniors and their families.

Develop and implement a Saskatchewan seniors strategy.

Last year, neighbouring Manitoba released a Provincial Seniors Strategy. Developed in consultation and collaboration with various stakeholders, this seniors strategy presents a vision for aging well. It prioritizes several initiatives to improve the aging experience, with goals to deliver results on seven areas of focus, including safe, inclusive, accessible communities, high quality services, financial security, reducing ageism and ableism, and others.



A HEALTHIER FUTURE FOR AGING IN SASKATCHEWAN

But Saskatchewan does not have a seniors strategy. And with a growing aging population, a seniors strategy is needed to future-proof policies and focus investments, resources and programs to enable aging with dignity in Saskatchewan.

A commitment to develop and implement a seniors strategy, with adequate investment, performance measurement and accountability are needed to achieve results.

In collaboration with partners, the next government must develop and implement a provincial seniors strategy. This includes measuring outcomes and publicly reporting on performance to fully realize the goal of making Saskatchewan a great place to age.

Saskatchewan's next government must commit to developing and implementing a Saskatchewan seniors strategy.

Enable aging in place.

The Canada Health Act guarantees that access to health care services is a fundamental right for all Canadians. And appropriate access to care is key to healthy aging.

Consistent primary care is essential to manage health, and without it, older adults in Saskatchewan are increasingly winding up in emergency rooms, with severe or more complex conditions that are harder to treat. Saskatchewanian's well-being, quality of life and health outcomes are suffering, and informal caregivers are stretched to the limit. Older adults in Saskatchewan need access to care where they live.

Most older adults want to age in place, at home, in their communities. Older adults represent the fastest-growing segment of the population. But gaps in healthcare and social policies are putting barriers in the way of their independence and undermining their role in maintaining vibrant, healthy communities and economies.

Community and home care enable people to live at home, remain

safe and independent and improve or maintain their health and quality of life through supports ranging from nursing to personal care to homemaking. Unpaid caregivers play an essential role in enabling aging in place; caregivers deserve financial and other support such as respite to fulfill this role.

Saskatchewan's next government must improve access to care, by ensuring funding and services to enable aging in place – including access to publicly-funded home care, access to local care providers, support for caregivers and improved wait times for care.

Saskatchewan's next government must invest in the continuum of care, from primary to home to long-term care, address wait times in the public health-care system, invest in tools and programs to enable older adults to age in place and ensure the work of caregivers is recognized and supported.

Enforce mandatory standards for long-term care.

In response to the devastating conditions in long-term care facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, Federal Retirees called on all levels of government to collaborate on a national review of long-term care.

In early 2023, [national long-term care standards](#) were announced. These standards were developed under the leadership of Dr. Samir Sinha, who acted as chair of the technical committee that developed the standards with collaboration between the Health Standards Organization (HSO) and the Canadian Standards Association (CSA).

The standards were developed with a rigorous, evidence-based process, led by experts and with the full participation of people with lived experience, with multiple public and focused consultations. The resulting standards provide a minimum standard of care and service delivery along with infection prevention and control.

The mandate for the project did not require adoption of the new standards to become mandatory. That's why we are asking





A HEALTHIER FUTURE FOR AGING IN SASKATCHEWAN

governments to implement the standards.

While Saskatchewan does have [Program Guidelines for Special-care Homes](#), they are merely guidelines – not standards – and are not enforced.

It is imperative that the Saskatchewan government act to ensure not only that long-term and special care settings are regulated and inspected, but also that standards meet or exceed the national standards and are enforced.

Saskatchewan's next government must ensure Saskatchewan's long-term care (also called special care) homes follow mandatory standards which are reviewed and enforced.

Talking to candidates

You never know when you'll get a chance to ask candidates or their campaigners about their positions on the issues most important to older adults in Saskatchewan.

Keep this sheet handy. These questions are friendly conversation starters, and you can use the information shared here as quick speaking points when you connect with candidates and their campaigners. And remember, you can always ask follow-up questions if the answer is unclear or you want to know more!

- 1 Seniors are a fast-growing demographic in Saskatchewan. What is your party's strategy to meet seniors' needs?
- 2 Will your party commit to appointing an independent, effective seniors advocate that reports to the legislature?
- 3 Does your party plan to develop and implement a Saskatchewan seniors strategy? If yes, when? If no, why not?
- 4 What is your party's plan to ensure Saskatchewanians have access to a family doctor through our public health care system?

- 5 How will your party invest in public health care and improve the continuum of health care services for Saskatchewanians?
 - 6 How will your party support older adults in Saskatchewan to age in place?
 - 7 How will you ensure the work of caregivers is recognized and supported?
 - 8 How will your party ensure Saskatchewan's long-term care and special care homes are held to a high standard of care?
 - 9 Will your party commit to enforcing long-term care standards?
- And be sure to follow-up and ask candidates and their campaigners when they'll follow through on their promises to older adults in Saskatchewan.

