



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CMA, CARP challenge candidates to adopt National Seniors Care Strategy *Open letter to federal by-election candidates*

Ottawa, Toronto (June 27, 2014) — A majority of the candidates but only two of the three major parties in Monday's federal byelections have committed to a National Seniors Care Strategy in response to the CMA-CARP Challenge.

The Canadian Medical Association and CARP came together to issue a challenge to all candidates in the four June 30 federal byelections to endorse or reject specific elements of a pan-Canadian seniors care strategy.

The Seniors Care Challenge asks the candidates if they would endorse or reject 12 seniors care issues. Responses to the 12-point challenge are attached and posted on the two organizations' websites <http://healthcaretransformation.ca/> and www.carp.ca. Responses were received from New Democrat and Liberal candidates and other parties but not from the Conservatives.

The questions to by-election candidates in the Ontario ridings of Trinity-Spadina and Scarborough-Agincourt and the Alberta ridings of MacLeod and Fort McMurray-Athabasca asked the candidates to endorse or reject [or pass on] 12 specific seniors' care issues :

1. Federal role in setting standards and funding
2. Pharmacare to ensure affordable medication regardless of postal code
3. Wait time benchmarks for home care and long term care
4. Timely access to palliative care
5. National Seniors' Care Strategy with funding
6. Caregiver support – financial, training and respite
7. National Dementia Care Strategy
8. Immediate national conversation on end of life care, choices, rights
9. Tax breaks for long term care savings vehicle
10. Integrated continuum of care
11. Improved pension system
12. Federal infrastructure funding for continuing care

"CARP members will be pleased that the majority of the candidates and two of the three major parties committed to the priority health advocacy issues for CARP members. However, they will be disappointed that the Conservatives declined to offer this simple commitment. These are ballot issues for our members," said Susan Eng, Vice-President, Advocacy for CARP.

“The time for a seniors strategy for Canada’s aging society has come,” CMA President Dr. Louis Hugo Francescutti. “We are delighted this issue is finally turning up on political radar screens.”

Polling by the CMA and CARP in recent months has shown seniors health care to be a priority issue. A Nanos Research [poll](#) commissioned by the CMA found on April 8 that almost 6 in 10 voters in key ridings across Canada said they would support another party if their current political brand fails to make seniors care a priority in the next federal election. CARP members polled consistently list health care as their top priority.

In the 2011 federal election 64% of those casting ballots were over the age of 55. CARP members say they always vote. They are among Canada’s most politically engaged voters.

*The **Canadian Medical Association (CMA)** is the national voice of Canadian physicians. Founded in 1867, the CMA is a voluntary professional organization representing more than 80,000 of Canada’s physicians and comprising 12 provincial and territorial medical associations and 60 national medical organizations. CMA’s mission is to serve and unite the physicians of Canada and be the national advocate, in partnership with the people of Canada, for the highest standards of health and health care*

***CARP** is a national, non-partisan, non-profit organization committed to advocating for a New Vision of Aging for Canada, social change that will bring financial security, equitable access to health care and freedom from discrimination. CARP seeks to ensure that the marketplace serves the needs and expectations of our generation and provides value-added benefits, products and services to our members. Through our network of chapters across Canada, CARP is dedicated to building a sense of community and shared values among our members in support of CARP’s mission.*

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