



SENIORS FOR SOCIAL ACTION (ONTARIO)

CONVERSATION WITH FEDERAL CANDIDATES

March 31, 2025

Preamble

Now that the Federal election is underway you will likely be hearing from your local candidates. This article is intended to assist you as you hold discussions with candidates in your areas.

While we recognize that the Trump tariffs are a significant issue for most Canadians and that candidates are focused on this, there is some room to make headway on three issues that affect older adults that are Federal issues.

NATURALLY OCCURRING RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES WITH SUPPORT SERVICES (NORC-SSPs)

Some of you will have attended the recent SSAO Zoom Session on Growing Community Supports for Older Adults presented by Christina Bisanz, the CEO of CHATS (Community and Home Assistance to Seniors) on March 20th. The recording can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPbvlmXSIJo>

In this session Christina spoke about CHATS' commitment to developing NORC-SSP's (Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities with Support Service Programs) in York Region.

Tony Van Bynen, the Liberal MP for the area has long been a proponent of NORCS, which he defines as "[a community with a large proportion of residents over 60, but was not specifically planned or designed to meet the needs of seniors living independently in their homes](#)". Tony has reassured his constituents that Seamus O'Regan, the Minister of Labour and Seniors has visited CHATS to meet with older adults and has discussed how the Federal government could continue to provide them with support.

This signals that the Federal government remains committed to NORCs and to assisting older adults to age in place.

When your candidates visit, please be sure to mention that you are a member of Seniors for Social Action Ontario and that you support the Federal government funding service coordinators and community workers to develop and staff NORC-SSP's to assist older adults to age in place.

AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE, SUPPORTIVE HOUSING INITIATIVES

Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada (HICC) is now responsible for reporting on National Housing Strategy (NHS) progress.

[Canada's National Housing Strategy offers funding and works in partnership with non-profits, developers, and local municipal and regional governments to increase the supply of housing and its quality and affordability.](#)

When your candidates visit, please tell them that many older adults are renters and live in non-accessible housing, placing them at risk of institutionalization. Let them know that you would like to see Canada's National Housing Strategy include requirements that new housing, especially rental and community housing, be accessible and affordable for older adults.

Please mention as well that new housing buildings should be created with space available to house integrated support services for the older adults living in them. These include PACE (Program of All Inclusive Care of the Elderly), Hub and Spoke Programs, and meeting and activity space for NORCs.

Please see SSAO YouTube Recordings on:

PACE <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HN2wAaa7s0E&t=74s>

ONECONNECT https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7L3I6myexk&t=133s

Hub and Spoke <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wMf-ApnVZw&t=808s>

NORCs:

University Health Network Presentation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGHMa8vDpeo&t=214s>

Older Adults Empowering Themselves Presentation on NORCs

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_sUT72Qqx4&t=447s

REQUIRE THAT PROVINCES USE FEDERAL HEALTH TRANSFER PAYMENTS TO FUND NON-PROFIT HOME CARE SERVICES TO OLDER ADULTS

In Ontario, the government policy is to privatize many health services even though [privatization has been shown to result in less quality, especially in long-term care.](#) Home Care companies that have received contracts through the competitive bidding process in Ontario [have also often failed to deliver quality services to older adults.](#)

When your candidates come calling, tell them that you want to see Federal Health transfer payments allocated to provinces be used to fund non-profit, not for-profit long-term care and Home Care for older adults with an emphasis on helping older adults to age in place.

You can make a difference this election by becoming active in supporting the candidate of your choice, making a donation if you are able, and by telling candidates of all political stripes that they have a role to play in supporting aging in place and the provision of higher quality services to older adults by supporting non-profit service delivery.

When older adults speak up, politicians need to listen.