



Ambassador Toolkit

Federal Government 2020

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Step 1: Identify and Find Out More about Your Member of Parliament

To find your electoral district, your Member of Parliament and other parliamentary responsibilities they hold, visit:

<https://www.ourcommons.ca/Members>

MPs often have additional parliamentary responsibilities or appointments, including being named a cabinet minister or member of a committee. These are of special interest as your MP may have a closer connection to an issue and may potentially be in a closer position of influence on decision making or advocacy. For example, parliamentary responsibilities relating to Health and Finance would be of special interest to the Parkinson Community.

Step 2: Get Prepared

Review Parkinson Canada's Advocacy Infographic available at: <http://bit.ly/2SjHG61>

The infographic shares key information and data on Parkinson's disease and access to care in Canada, as well as the ask to government for a Plan for Parkinson's.

Parkinson Canada is asking for \$100 million over five years to develop a Plan for Parkinson's that addresses the following priority areas:

- Invest \$30 million in the Canadian Open Parkinson Network (C-OPN) to accelerate research discoveries in the cause, treatment, and ultimately a cure for Parkinson's
- Increase the skilled Parkinson's workforce to promote early diagnosis and improve access to specialized multidisciplinary care
- Ensure Parkinson's treatments and therapies are affordable and available
- Improve access to care partner resources and supports
- Increase access to evidence-based community programs that improve quality of life
- Ensure access to palliative care and end-of-life options

Ask your MP to Champion a Plan for Parkinson's by:

1. Writing a letter to the Minister of Health requesting a Plan for Parkinson's be urgently addressed
2. Use #PlanforParkinsons to show their support and promote the need for a Plan for Parkinson's on social media

What is the Canadian Open Parkinson Network (C-OPN)?

Parkinson Canada is a founding partner, investing and collaborating with leading researchers from across Canada to create the Canadian Open Parkinson Network (C-OPN).

C-OPN will bring together Canada's best in Parkinson's research and will give them a platform to share information and make new connections. The network will give investigators access to unprecedented data and will support large-scale, multidisciplinary projects that would not be possible at a single research site.

Network Goals:

- Promote and facilitate multi-centric and multidisciplinary research in Parkinson's disease and related disorders
- Pool datasets to better understand pathophysiology
- Increase opportunity and participation in clinical trials
- Contribute to the development of new treatments
- Optimize translational research to clinicians and caregivers more rapidly
- Improve prevention and treatment strategies and accelerate the discovery of a cure

Parkinson Canada's infographic with more information on C-OPN is available at <http://bit.ly/394EaU3>

You do not have to have all of the answers! If there are specific questions that your MP has asked have about the facts and figures presented in the infographic or the asks to government that you are not comfortable answering, you can always let them know that you will bring it back to the team and Parkinson Canada and we will get back to them or give you the answers to follow back up with them – keep the conversation going!

Make it Personal. Be prepared to share your story with Parkinson's or caring for someone with Parkinson's.

What challenges have you faced?

What would the government investing in a plan to accelerate Parkinson's research and address access issues mean to you?

Are you currently underserved or cannot get access to a therapy?

Did you wait a long time for an accurate diagnosis?

Are you paying out of pocket for treatments and therapies?

Prepare 3–5 key points about your journey that you want to get across to your MP.

Questions for Members of Parliament

We want to know about who our MPs are! Do they have a connection to Parkinson's? Can we count on them as a champion?

Ask these questions in one-on-one meetings or on scheduled phone calls. These are the key questions to ask your MP, whether they come to you or you go to them. Keep in mind, even outside of an election period, MPs often still knock on doors to speak with constituents, so be on the lookout!

1. Do you know someone with Parkinson's?
2. How does your party intend to improve the lives of Canadians living with Parkinson's?
3. Can I count on you to champion a Plan for Parkinson's? Will you write a letter to the Minister of Health asking for a Plan for Parkinson's to be addressed? Will you use #PlanforParkinsons to show your support and promote the need for a Plan for Parkinson's?

Step 3: Get Involved!

Here are a few ways you can get involved and have *your* voice heard by government:

1. Meet with your MP in-person or by phone
2. Write a letter or email to your MP
3. Connect with you MP, the Health Minister, and Finance Minister through social media and use #PlanforParkinson's

Considerations when Meeting/Interacting with Members of Parliament

- MPs have very busy schedules as their time in the riding is limited due to their commitments in Ottawa. For this reason, they are trying to meet with as many constituents as possible. Prepare yourself; expect to have around 20-30 minutes to meet with your MP.
- Meetings are not the only way to get time with an MP. Watch for local events that the MP is attending in your area. Check your local news and MP websites for

updates on where they will be. MPs also often have local newsletters that you can sign up for through their website that will keep you updated on their activities.

- As a charitable organization, Parkinson Canada is nonpartisan. When you are representing Parkinson Canada you must not show support or favour for one party over another. Maintain fair and equitable treatment at all times.

Build Relationships with Elected Officials

Good politics depend on ongoing ties with both your MP and their staff.

One of the most effective ways to keep in touch is to get to know staff in your MP's personal riding office. Riding offices are always looking for activities for the MP while he or she is in the Riding - they generally welcome suggestions for events, especially if there is some press potential. Contact the local office of your MP, tell them what you are doing, and invite the MP to take part in your event.

Work Together!

Working together with other Ambassadors in your riding or general area can be very beneficial to getting more attention from elected officials and to spread our message further. It can also avoid duplicating efforts!

To find out if there are more Ambassadors registered in your area, please reach out to the advocacy team advocacy@parkinson.ca.

Working together can make connecting with elected officials easier and less intimidating. We know reaching out can be a difficult task for some.

Calling on friends and loved ones to contact MPs is also helpful to add more voices.

Step 4: Share your Ambassador Experience

Keep the advocacy team at Parkinson Canada updated on your interactions with elected officials at advocacy@parkinson.ca

Have an innovative idea for interacting with elected officials? Tips? Share it with us so we can share it with the Ambassador Network.

Additional Resources

Template Agenda for Meeting with Members of Parliament

1. Introductions
 - share your connection to Parkinson's
 - ask if they have a connection to Parkinson's
2. Parkinson disease in Canada & Request
 - share the infographic and pick 3–5 data points to highlight from the document
 - highlight the ask for a Plan for Parkinson's
 - make it personal—provide your 3–5 prepared points on why this is important you as it relates to your personal experience with Parkinson's
3. Questions to ask your MP
 - How do you and your team intend to improve the lives of Canadians living with Parkinson's?
 - Can I count on you to champion a Plan for Parkinson's?
 - Will you write a letter to Minister of Health requesting a Plan for Parkinson's be urgently addressed as a health care priority?
 - What advice or feedback do you have for us on moving the Plan for Parkinson's forward?
4. Thank them for their time.

Sample Email to Elected Officials

1. Use this email template to request a meeting with your elected official.

Hello MP _____,

My name is _____. I am a resident in your riding of _____. I have been [living with Parkinson's disease for X years/month/caring for my _____ with Parkinson's for X years/months]. During this time I have experienced [add personal challenges with accessing care/services].

I am currently working as a Parkinson Ambassador in our community in partnership with Parkinson Canada. Parkinson Canada is an organization that provides education and support, advocacy, and funds for innovative research. I am requesting to meet with you to discuss the need for a Plan for Parkinson's in Canada to address priority needs for people with Parkinson's and care partners.

Thank you in advance for your response and I look forward to meeting with you.

[Signed]

2. Use this email template if you are unable to meet with your elected official but would like to share your story and the infographic with them.

Hello MP _____,

My name is _____. I am a resident in your riding of _____. I have been [living with Parkinson's disease for X years/month/caring for my _____ with Parkinson's for X years/months]. During this time I have experienced [add personal challenges with accessing care/services].

I am currently working as a Parkinson Ambassador in our community in partnership with Parkinson Canada. Parkinson Canada is an organization that provides education and support, advocacy, and funds for innovative research. I have attached a document from Parkinson Canada that provides an overview of Parkinson's disease in Canada and includes our ask for a Plan for Parkinson's.

I ask that you review this brief document and let me know the following:

How do you intend to improve the lives of Canadians living with Parkinson's in your role?

Can I count on you to champion a Plan for Parkinson's?

Will you write a letter to Minister of Health requesting a Plan for Parkinson's be urgently addressed as a health care priority?

What advice or feedback do you have for us on moving the Plan for Parkinson's forward?

Thank you in advance for your response.

[Signed]

Tips for Writing an Effective Letter or Email to Members of Parliament

House of Commons offices in Ottawa receive hundreds of letters from constituents each day. These guidelines will improve the effectiveness of your letter

Address your letter correctly. Be sure you have the correct address and salutation on your letter, referencing the styles above. You can find the address of all of your legislators using the links in Step 1.

Always start by writing to your local elected official. Elected officials are most interested in your concerns when they represent you.

Only address one issue per letter. Being concise on one specific topic will make for a quicker and more impactful response.

Be accurate. Beware of false or misleading information. Always double-check if you are not sure.

Make a specific ask. Make sure to ask your elected official to take an action. Whether it is asking for a meeting, a phone call, to support a bill or a current initiative, always ask for their position on the issue you're addressing in a response.

Make it personal. Share *your* story and how it affects *you*. Tie in your own experience and expertise using your own words.

Be polite and courteous! Rudeness or aggressiveness is sure to alienate the reader.

Be concise. Try to keep your letter as short as possible to ensure that your message is fully read. Elected officials receive many letters and it is possible that a longer letter may be skimmed.

Include your return address on your letter. Even in an email, always include your address so that the elected official knows that you live in the riding that they represent. Make sure your MP knows how to reach you. You should also include your phone number if you feel comfortable doing so.

Express appreciation. Thank them for their time and consideration. If appropriate, add a note about another initiative that they may have taken part in to show that you are following their activities in the community.

Follow up. Elected officials are busy and it can often take weeks for a response. If you find you have not gotten a response in an appropriate amount of time, follow up to confirm that your letter was received. This also be a phone call.

In addition, when you do receive a response, you can also send follow-up letters to thank them for their stand, or ask follow up questions if they provided you with an unsatisfactory response. Follow-up letters often have a much larger impact than the initial communication as the elected official will recognize the importance of the issue to you and it can be an opportunity to forge an ongoing relationship.

Remember, no postage is required to mail a letter to your MP in their Ottawa Office!

When addressing correspondence to Federal Dignitaries, please reference the proper styles:

Dignitary	Salutation	Final Salutation	In conversation
<p>Prime Minister of Canada The Right Honourable (full name), P.C., M.P. Prime Minister of Canada Langevin Block Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2</p> <p>Note: the term "Mr. Prime Minister" should not be used</p>	<p>Dear Prime Minister: or Prime Minister:</p>	<p>Yours sincerely,</p>	<p>"Prime Minister" first, then "Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss (name)"</p>
<p>Canadian Ministry</p> <p>1. Cabinet ministers For a Member of the House of Commons:</p> <p>The Honourable (full name), P.C., M.P. Minister of _____ House of Commons Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6</p> <p>Note: Members of the Ministry are members of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and retain the title "Honourable" for life, using the initials P.C. after their name. The term "Mr. Minister" or "Madame Minister" should not be used.</p>	<p>Dear Minister: Dear Colleague: (between colleagues) Dear Minister of State: Dear Colleague: (between colleagues)</p>	<p>Yours sincerely, Yours sincerely,</p>	<p>"Minister" first, then "Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss (name)" "Minister of State" first, then "Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss (name)"</p>
<p>Senators The Honourable (full name), Senator The Senate Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A4</p> <p>Note: A senator who is a member of the Queen's Privy Council is addressed as "Senator the Honourable (full name), P.C." After a Senator retires, he/she retains the title "Honourable" for life but the salutation is "Dear Sir/Madam" or "Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss (name)".</p>	<p>Dear Senator (name):</p>	<p>Yours sincerely,</p>	<p>"Senator (name)"</p>
<p>Members of the House of Commons Mr. John Smith, M.P. or The Honourable John Smith, P.C., M.P. House of Commons Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6</p> <p>Note: The members of the House of Commons who are members of the Queen's Privy Council retain the title "Honourable" for life and use the initials "P.C." after their name. M.P.: Member of the House of Commons P.C., M.P.: Member of the Privy Council and Member of the House of Commons</p>	<p>Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss (name):</p>	<p>Yours sincerely,</p>	<p>"Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss (name)"</p>

For a full list of styles, including the ones above, please visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/protocol-guidelines-special-event/styles-address.html#a2>

Social Media Engagement

Facebook/Twitter

- Average wait time to see a specialist for diagnosis of Parkinson's in Canada is 11 months and in some regions the wait is 2+ years. I'm calling on the government to improve access to care in Canada #cdnpoli #PlanforParkinsons <http://bit.ly/2SiHG61>
- 100,000 Canadians are living with Parkinson's today and that number is expected to double by 2031. The time is now to ensure equitable, timely and affordable access to care #cdnpoli #PlanforParkinsons <http://bit.ly/2SiHG61>
- Researchers call Parkinson's a "pandemic" due to the growing prevalence in all regions around the world. Canada needs a plan to ensure Canadians with Parkinson's and care partners have access to equitable, timely and affordable care #cdnpoli #PlanforParkinsons <http://bit.ly/2SiHG61>
- Parkinson's has one of the highest direct healthcare costs annually of any neurological disease. Canadians living with Parkinson's and care partners deserve equitable access to drug treatments, exercise and other therapeutic options for multidisciplinary care #cdnpoli #PlanforParkinsons <http://bit.ly/2SiHG61>