



Advocacy Toolkit

KEY FACTS ABOUT CHRONIC CONDITIONS IN ATLANTIC CANADA

209

Approximately 209 people in Newfoundland and Labrador live with Scleroderma and there is no cure.

1/3

1 in 3 people in Newfoundland and Labrador have arthritis; more than any other province.

18%

18% of people in Newfoundland and Labrador live with type 1, diagnosed type 2 or undiagnosed type 2 diabetes.

31%

Only 31% of Atlantic Canadians living with Parkinson's saw a Movement Disorder Specialist in the past year vs the national average of 54%.

77%

77% of people with Parkinson's in Newfoundland and Labrador surveyed said Parkinson's made them retire earlier than planned.

**\$31
Million**

The annual cost of Multiple Sclerosis to Newfoundland and Labrador is \$31M. Includes costs to the healthcare system, reduced employment, home modifications and more.

For more information and data, please visit chronic-care.ca.

Considerations when interacting with your Candidates

1. Candidates are very busy as they are meeting with as many constituents as possible. Candidates may or may not be able to take a one-to-one meeting. If they agree to a meeting, be prepared and expect to have no more than 15-30 minutes with them.
2. Meetings are not the only way to get time with a candidate. Check the news or their website for local events they will be attending. Local events can be a great opportunity for you to introduce yourself and briefly share your issues and concerns. Remember to be prepared and concise with what you want to say. Sign up for their local newsletters to receive updates on their activities.
3. Remember to be *nonpartisan* while being an advocate for your community. Chronic Care engages with all parties and their members without bias. When advocating on our behalf, please refrain from showing support or favour for one party over another.

Suggested agenda for meeting with Candidates

1. Introductions
 - Share your connection to a chronic condition.
 - Ask if they have a connection to chronic conditions.
2. Chronic conditions in Atlantic Canada and request
 - Share key information on chronic conditions by highlighting some main points that were mentioned on page 1.
 - Request their commitment to improve access to care for those living with a chronic condition a priority and to ensure that improved health care is seen as important.
 - Make it personal by providing your main points on why this is important as it relates to your personal experience.
3. Questions to ask Candidates
 - Refer to the strategic asks from below, or use some of these sample questions:
 - How do you and your party intend to improve the lives of people living with chronic conditions?
 - How do you and your party intend to improve access to care for those with chronic conditions?
 - How do you and your party intend to provide more support to informal care partners?
4. Thank them for their time and let them know you will follow up!

Strategic asks for Candidates

The objective of outreach to your candidates, including meetings and letters, is to build a relationship with the official while raising awareness about chronic conditions in Atlantic Canada and to find areas of shared priorities. Consider raising the following questions:

1. Ask what measures their party intends to take for people living with chronic conditions to have access to medicines that can help manage symptoms.
2. Ask how their party intends to improve access to disability supports to allow those living with a chronic condition to manage the additional financial burden that comes with having a chronic condition.
3. Request that the candidate show their support for what you have discussed by sharing a message on social media emphasizing the importance of improving health care for those living with a chronic condition.
4. Ask them to learn more about chronic disease in your province. A great place for them to start is our website www.chronic-care.ca.
5. Request that the candidate share what they have learned on the need for improved health care outcomes for people with chronic conditions with their party.

SOCIAL MEDIA POST EXAMPLES



Atlantic Canadians living with chronic conditions need better access to care, especially specialist care. Let's make access to care a priority!



1 in 3 people in Newfoundland and Labrador live with arthritis, the highest in the country. It's time to take action on a strategy for chronic care!



Over 6000 people live with Parkinson's in Atlantic Canada, and that number is rising! The time is now for better access to care and a chronic care strategy!



Did you know? People in Atlantic Canada are more likely than anywhere else in the country to live with chronic illness. Our governments need to ensure that chronic care is a priority!

Tips for writing an effective letter and emails to Candidates

Address your letter correctly. Be sure you have the correct address and salutation in your letter. Also be sure to double check the spelling of the person's name. It's always best to err on the side of being formal with your correspondence with someone in political office, as this shows respect and builds stronger relations.

Only address one issue per letter. Being concise on one specific topic will make for a quicker and more impactful ask and 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 them to act. 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 are addressing.

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. Keep your letter as short as possible to ensure that your message is fully read. For letters, it should be no longer than one typed page. If sending an email, no more than 3-5 paragraphs is ideal.

Include your return address in your letter. Even in an email, always include your address so that the candidate knows that you live in the riding they represent. Make sure they know how to reach you and include your phone number if you're comfortable.

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

Follow up. Candidates are busy during and election and it may take time to respond. Follow up via phone or email to confirm that they received your letter if you have not received a timely response. When you do receive a response, send a follow-up thank-you letter and ask follow-up questions if they provided unsatisfactory responses. Follow-up letters often have a much larger impact than the initial communication as they will recognize the importance of the issue to you.

SAMPLE EMAILS TO CANDIDATES

1. Use this email template for meeting requests:

Dear first and last name,

My name is [name]. I am a resident in the riding of [name of riding]. I have been [describe if you have been living with a chronic condition, caring for someone living with a chronic condition, and for how long].

As a supporter of the [chronic condition] community, I am requesting to meet with you to discuss the need for the government to make care for chronic conditions a priority and commit to improving healthcare for those living with chronic conditions in our province.

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

[Signed]

[Your Address]

SAMPLE EMAILS TO CANDIDATES

2. Use this email template if you are unable to meet with your candidate but would like to share your story and requests with them:

Dear first and last name,

My name is [first name, last name]. I am a resident in the riding of [name of riding]. I have been [living with a chronic condition for X years/month/caring for my [RELATION TO PERSON LIVING WITH A CHONIC CONDITION] with a chronic condition for X years/months].

During this time, I have experienced [add personal challenges with accessing care/services].

As a supporter of the [chronic condition] community, I want to bring your attention to the urgent need to make [chronic condition] a priority and seek your commitment to improving health care for our community.

I would like you to consider the following questions:

1. How do you intend to improve the lives of people living with {chronic condition} in our province?
2. What measures does your party intend to take for our community members to have equitable and affordable access to care?
3. How does your party intend to improve access to disability supports for people living with [chronic condition] in our province?
4. Will you write a letter to your party leadership requesting their commitment to make chronic conditions a health care priority?

Thank you in advance for your response.

[Signed]

[Your Address]

ABOUT CHRONIC CARE

Chronic Care is a group of charities and advocacy groups in Atlantic Canada that have come together to advocate for people affected by chronic conditions. Our members include March of Dimes Canada, LungNSPEI, MS Canada, Parkinson Canada, Arthritis Society Canada, Diabetes Canada, CARP, and Scleroderma Atlantic.

We work to identify and show discrepancies in healthcare affordability for Atlantic Canadians living with chronic disease, compared to the rest of the country, collect data on our community members, and act as a conduit between the community and policymakers.

Please visit chronic-care.ca for more information.

