

Candidate meeting guidelines and questions for candidates

This document provides guidelines for requesting a meeting with candidates in your riding and sample questions you can ask candidates during the meeting or at local debates.

Candidate Meeting Guidelines

1. Check the Federal Target Riding list. While you can meet with the candidates in any riding, we want to prioritize meeting with candidates in target ridings where we can have the most impact.
2. Candidate contact information by riding will be available on the Elections Canada website (www.elections.ca) after the writ drop once the candidate is officially nominated. Please reach out to Imreet (imreetk@ona.org) or Andre (andref@ona.org) if you need assistance finding a candidate in your riding (or nearby).
3. You should meet with the candidate along with another ONA member (or several members).
4. Email the candidate's campaign and request a meeting. After emailing, phone the campaign office to confirm your email was received. Make sure to contact the campaign, not the constituency office if the candidate is an incumbent. The request to meet should come from a constituent (voter in the riding). See a sample email request below.
5. Once you have scheduled a time to meet with the candidate, review the questions for candidates below and connect with your mobilizer and GR specialist to discuss talking points and information specific to the candidate and the riding.
6. During the meeting, speak as a nurse or health-care professional, not as a representative of your workplace or as an ONA spokesperson.
7. Don't share privileged information about your employer or compromise patient privacy.
8. You are the expert on health care issues, not the candidate. Candidates welcome background information you can provide as a nurse or health-care professional.
9. If the candidate asks a question and you don't know the answer, tell them you will get back to them.

10. Try to get a commitment from the candidate during the meeting on our key demands. See sample questions relating to our demands below.

Sample Email Requesting a Meeting

Subject line: Meeting request to discuss health-care issues

Dear _____,

My colleagues and I are nurses/health-care professionals who live/work in your riding. As front-line health-care workers, we provide our community with essential health care.

We would like to meet with you to discuss health-care issues during the federal election. Health care is a top election issue in our riding and we hope you can make time to meet with us.

Please let us know your availability to meet with us on_____.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Your name here

2025 Federal Election – Questions for candidates

As an ONA member, you have an important and valuable perspective on the consequences of an understaffed and under-funded public health-care system. Below are questions you can ask candidates that will help shed light on how their party will prioritize our workplaces, health care, and communities if they form government. If you are able, please speak about your own experience, and add local examples as you go.

1: Fix the nursing shortage in all sectors

Canada has a severe nursing shortage and Ontario is the worst in the country. According to data collected by the Canadian Federation of Nurses Union, 83 per cent of nurses reported that there are not enough health-care staff to meet the needs of patients. In other jurisdictions like California and Australia, safe staffing ratios have proven to reduce burnout and improve retention and recruitment. While the provincial government administers and delivers health care, the federal government can set and implement national standards like safe staffing ratios. **Will you support safe staffing ratios and make it a national standard?**

2: Improve access by fully funding public health care

Medicare in Canada was launched thanks to a federal commitment to share costs with the provinces equally. But over the last 50 years, federal contributions have decreased significantly, putting a strain on provincial governments to make up the rest. Access to care is worsening because there isn't enough funding for Canada's growing and aging population. Private, for-profit corporations are looking to take advantage of the situation. Without proper funding for public health care, we will continue to see service cuts and closures, retention and recruitment struggles and long wait times. The federal government is responsible for upholding the *Canada Health Act* and ensuring that our health-care system is accessible, universal and comprehensive. **If elected will you enforce these principles in each province? Will you improve reporting standards to ensure provincial governments spends health transfers on public health care?**

3: Expand pharmacare to cover all prescriptions

Our public health-care system was built on the value that everyone should have access to care, regardless of where you live or how much you make. But many Canadians cannot afford dental care, prescription medication and mental health services. Our health-care system must be expanded to include these services so that everyone can get the care they need, when they need it. Studies show a quarter of Canadians decided not to fill or renew a prescription or did something to make a prescription last longer due to its cost, in 2019 – and the cost of living has only gotten worse since then. **If elected, will you expand pharmacare beyond covering diabetes and contraceptive medication?**

4: Improve the social determinants of health

Nurses and health-care workers know many factors impact a person's health and well-being. Being able to put food on the table or have a roof over your head can be the difference between life and death. Access to child care, and other important services contribute to our quality of life. The sad reality is that access to basic necessities is slipping out of reach for so many people and this results in worse health outcomes and is costing our health-care system more. **As our MP, will you address the social determinants of health by expanding affordable housing, addressing skyrocketing food costs, protecting affordable child care, and implementing the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?**