**Sample letter**

Dear [MP’s name],

I’m reaching out to you today to bring attention to the issues facing people with kidney disease and how your leadership can help to transform their lives.

Kidney disease affects over 4 million Canadians, and it’s a growing crisis that is under-recognized and underdiagnosed. One reason for this is that it’s a silent disease. By the time symptoms appear, kidney disease is often very advanced. For those people whose kidneys fail, the only treatment options are dialysis, a transplant, or conservative kidney management, which treats symptoms until end of life. None of these is a cure, and dialysis, which is the most common treatment, is an invasive, time-consuming, and exhausting treatment that takes up to five hours, three times a week. It’s an incredible physical, psychological, and financial burden for patients and families. It’s also one of the most expensive treatments in modern medicine; it costs the health care system 2.9 billion dollars per year.

With early detection and proper care, kidney disease can be managed and kidney failure prevented. There are new medications now that can slow or even halt the progression of kidney disease. Proper management of other chronic diseases that are linked to kidney disease, including diabetes, high blood pressure, or heart disease, can also help slow its progression. There have been exciting and innovative developments in research to address the need for organs for donation.

But challenges remain. Early diagnosis requires regular blood and urine tests to identify kidney disease, especially in people who are at risk, including people with co-existing conditions or a family history of kidney disease. Certain ethnicities, like First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, are also at significantly higher risk. Many people don’t have access to a primary care provider who can provide the kind of continuous care needed to order those tests. Those who are diagnosed need affordable access to the medications that will delay or prevent kidney failure.

With your leadership, Canada can become a model for progressive, compassionate health care reform. I respectfully urge you to consider the following during your campaign, and if you’re elected, throughout your term:

Improved access to kidney testing, especially for people at risk of kidney disease

Affordable access to medications that will slow and even prevent the progression of kidney disease

Increased public awareness of kidney disease

Increased funding for research and treatment

Your commitment could transform the lives of people who are at risk of kidney disease, as well as those who are living with it today. Working toward policies that lead to better health outcomes and quality of health for all Canadians will also lead to significant savings to the health care system.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter, and I’m eager to see the positive changes that your leadership can bring. I’d welcome the opportunity to discuss this further at your convenience.

Sincerely,

[Your full name]

[Your address]

[Your contact information]