

Now is the Time: Kidney Health, Not Kidney Disease

2025 Federal Election Toolkit



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Why this election matters

The Canadian federal election will be held on Monday, April 28th, and it's more important than ever to draw attention to kidney disease. The Kidney Foundation of Canada is calling on our next government to recognize and address chronic kidney disease for the urgent health care crisis it's become.

Advocacy is a powerful tool for change. As someone living with or affected by kidney disease, you can use this toolkit to help you make your voice heard. Your Member of Parliament (MP) works for you, and they want to hear from you and understand your concerns. Tell your local candidates that we want Canada's next government to demonstrate leadership by investing in kidney disease prevention, early diagnosis, equitable access to treatment and ongoing kidney research. Kidney disease is silent. Your voice shouldn't be. Let's change the conversation from kidney disease to kidney health!

It's also important to remember that reaching out to the candidates in your electoral district lays the groundwork for a long-term relationship between you and your candidates, whether they become your MP, a member of the official opposition, or another party influencing policy decisions.

The issue

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a complex, progressive, and life-threatening illness that affects 1 in 10 Canadians. That's over 4 million people, and millions more are at risk. Despite being the 11th leading cause of death in Canada¹, CKD is not considered a chronic disease in its own right, nor is it prioritized as a public health issue. Kidney disease is preventable and treatable and it deserves greater attention in health policy decisions.

Certain racial and ethnic minorities face even higher rates of kidney disease. CKD is particularly prevalent in Indigenous communities, where the number of First Nations, Métis, or Inuit adults affected by CKD is twice that of the broader population². This disparity is related to high rates of diabetes and hypertension, both of which are significant risk factors for CKD. Social determinants of health like limited access to healthcare, economic disparities, access to basic services, and systemic racism exacerbate the situation.

For those Canadians who are diagnosed with kidney failure, the only life-sustaining treatments are dialysis or a transplant, and neither is a cure. People whose kidneys have failed will bear the physical, psychological, and financial burdens that come with these treatments for the rest of their lives. Dialysis in particular is invasive, expensive, time consuming, and exhausting. As a result, it has a significant impact on a patient's and their family's quality of life.

These are the **facts**^{3,4}:

- **42%** of people with kidney failure are **under 65**
- **Diabetes** contributes to **33%** of kidney failure
- Over **29,900** Canadians are on **dialysis**
- Over **2,400** Canadians are **waiting for a kidney transplant**
- The median wait time for a kidney transplant from a deceased donor is **3.25 years**



Priorities for kidney health in Canada

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is developing a national framework for chronic kidney disease. The purpose of the framework is to provide a comprehensive tool to guide decision-making and change at all levels of government. It will address ongoing challenges in CKD prevention, management, and treatment and provide a roadmap for government policies and programs that will reduce the burden of CKD.

Through extensive consultation with the kidney community, including people with lived experience, caregivers, clinicians, allied health care providers, and researchers, we've identified three key priorities for improving kidney health in Canada.

1. Prevention, early diagnosis, and early intervention

Focusing on prevention and early detection of chronic kidney disease will significantly reduce its burden on those affected and on the health care system. By identifying at-risk individuals early, implementing preventative measures, and intervening early in the disease process, the progression of CKD can be slowed or even halted, leading to better health outcomes and significantly reduced health care costs.

2. Equitable kidney care for all Canadians

Ensuring equitable access to kidney care across Canada is crucial for addressing health disparities. All Canadians, regardless of their background or location, must have access high-quality care at every stage of kidney disease.

3. Kidney research and data collection

Both robust research and comprehensive, standardized data collection are critical to advancing CKD prevention and care. Continued investment in innovative research, along with increased access to clinical trials, new therapies and new medications will improve health outcomes for those who are living with kidney disease. Comprehensive and standardized data collection would serve as a powerful tool for tracking trends, identifying gaps in care, and promoting data-driven policy changes.

Take action: What you can do

In the coming weeks, there is a lot we can do to help make sure that the next government steps up to make kidney disease a priority. In the lead-up to the election your local candidates will be in your district trying to secure your vote. This is your chance to tell them why CKD is important to you and what changes you would like to see.

Engage with your candidates

There are many ways to engage with your candidates. They may knock on your door, you may run into them in the community, or you can attend a town hall. You can post on social media and tag your candidates, visit their office, or write to them. Here are some things to keep in mind as you do that:

Emphasize your position as a constituent: Candidates and MPs are eager to hear from you to win your vote. Once elected, MP offices prioritize the concerns of residents in their ridings. Their primary job as elected officials is to listen to your concerns and address them. When interacting with a candidate or MP, let them know that you're a member of their local community, and your role within it.

Build positive relationships: Fostering long-term relationships with candidates is extremely important. With a close connection, candidates who are elected as MPs are more likely to advocate for your needs which in turn builds trust and credibility toward your message. Politicians value the opinions of those they trust, and frequent communication is key to gaining that trust, allowing you to provide ongoing advice and feedback to your MP.

Get personal: Share your personal experiences and those of your loved ones. Be clear about the commitments you would like them to make, and how your personal experiences reflect the issue at hand. Numbers and statistics are important, but elected representatives are more likely to connect to hearing about your lived experience. Ultimately these are issues affecting you and your community, so it's best to speak from that perspective.

Here are some ways you can reach out to your candidates:

Arrange a meeting: These require the most resources and effort to schedule, prepare for, and follow up on, but they're the most effective way to build strong relationships with potential candidates.

Visit their campaign office: If candidates are available at their office, they may be willing to meet with you. If not, you can indicate your interest to the staff about scheduling a meeting. Be sure to leave your contact information and a document outlining your advocacy priorities with them.

Call them on the phone: Ideal for concise and effective communication by quickly voicing concerns and inquiring about scheduling a meeting. Keep your script simple.

Send an email: This is the most convenient option if you're requesting a meeting with a candidate or simply voicing your concerns. You can also attach and send a formal letter via email. It's best to personalize your email and to include information on how CKD is affecting you or your community. You'll find a sample email at the end of this toolkit.

Write a letter: This is an effective option, especially if it's on behalf of many constituents, because it shows that you spent time drafting the letter and engaging other people. Note that letters take a longer time to organize and may not receive a timely response. It's a good idea to attach a digital copy of your letter to an email. There is a sample letter at the end of the toolkit.

Social media: This is an efficient way to get in touch with candidates and fellow constituents and follow along with local events.

In public: If you encounter candidates in public during the campaign period, use your judgment and feel free to introduce yourself and express your interest in setting up a meeting with them to discuss your concerns. Take the opportunity to tell them about the impact of chronic kidney disease on your community.

Other ideas:

- Organize an event and offer a candidate the opportunity to meet community members
- Attend a debate, and ask a question
- Start a petition
- Create/place a sign on your front lawn on the cause you are passionate about
- Search for local coalitions and groups advocating for health issues, and participate in their efforts
- Volunteer for a candidate who resonates with you to bolster your advocacy efforts

If you attend a public event like a town hall or debate, let your candidates know how their position will impact you and others in the kidney community. Here are some questions you can ask when you speak with them:

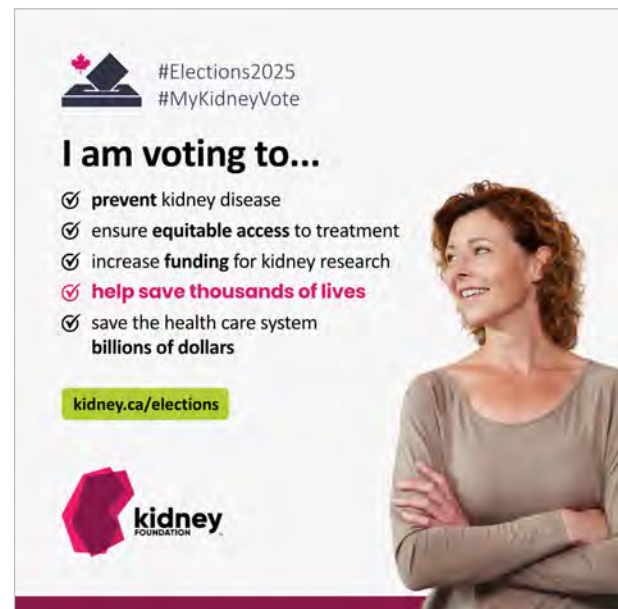
- Kidney disease is often detected too late, leading to kidney failure that requires dialysis or a transplant. What will your party do to improve access to the diagnostic tests that are necessary to intervene early, especially for at-risk populations?
- Many Canadians struggle to access the medications they need to slow or halt the progression of kidney disease. Do you support expanding coverage for essential drugs through Pharmacare?
- Many people living with kidney disease, especially those on dialysis, struggle to remain employed due to their time-consuming and exhausting treatments. What will you do to introduce greater financial support for patients and families?
- Kidney disease takes a severe psychological and emotional toll on families. What will your government do to support the mental health of patients and their support networks?
- If elected, how will you support and elevate the work of health charities like The Kidney Foundation of Canada?

Get the word out on social media

Sharing stories or posts about living with CKD on social media can be a great way to get your story seen by candidates. You can tag your local candidate on social media by typing @ followed by their username in your post or comment. You can also use hashtags to let us know that you're posting:

#Elections2025 #ItsOurVote #Elxn45 #VotingMatters #MyKidneyVote

Sample posts:



Get the word out on social media (cont'd)

I want the next Canadian government to lead the world in identifying people in the early stages of kidney disease and ensuring that they have access to the latest treatments.

This #Elections2025, let's change the conversation from kidney disease to kidney health. Act NOW for a healthier future.

[tag candidates here] #VotingMatters #Elxn45 #ItsOurVote #MyKidneyVote

Addressing kidney disease in Canada will save countless lives and billions of dollars in health care costs. Will you make this a top priority if you are elected?

The future of over 4 million Canadians depends on it.

[tag candidates here] #Elections2025 #ReadyToVote #Elxn45 #CdnPoli #MyKidneyVote

I'm voting in #Elections2025 because I care about kidney health.

Canada's next government must step up to prevent kidney disease, ensure equitable access to treatment, and boost funding for kidney research. People with kidney disease will benefit, and so will everyone who is at risk!

[tag candidates here] #ItsOurVote #Elxn45 #VotingMatters #MyKidneyVote

Vote

The first step is to find out which electoral district you live in and who's running in your district. It's easy to do! Enter your postal code on the [Elections Canada](#) page. You'll then be taken to a page for your riding, where you can:

- Find out the names of the candidates in your electoral district
- Find out where to vote
- [Register to vote](#)

There are 3 ways to vote:

1. By mail
2. At an advance poll
3. On election day

Remember, bring some identification to vote on election day. There are three options to prove your identity and address. Find out more [here](#).






Key dates

Election day: Monday, April 28, 2025

Advance polls:

- Friday, April 18, 2025
- Saturday, April 19, 2025
- Sunday, April 20, 2025
- Monday, April 21, 2025

You can access the party platforms and get more information on your riding's candidates here:

Party	Candidates
 Liberal	Liberal Party candidates
 CONSERVATIVE	Conservative Party candidates
 NDP	NDP candidates
 GREEN PARTY	Green Party candidates
 BLOC Québécois	Bloc Québécois candidates

The Kidney Foundation of Canada

Our vision:

Excellent kidney health, optimal quality of life for those affected by kidney disease, and a cure.

Our mission:

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is the leading charity committed to eliminating the burden of kidney disease through:

- Funding and stimulating innovative research for better prevention, treatments and a cure;
- Providing education and support to prevent kidney disease in those at risk and empower those with kidney disease to optimize their health status;
- Advocating for improved access to high quality health care;
- Increasing public awareness and commitment to advancing kidney health and organ donation.

Feel free to contact us if you have any comments or questions about this toolkit.

Advocacy team:

advocacy@kidney.ca

References:

¹ Statistics Canada, Leading causes of death, total population, by age group (2019 to 2023) <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1310039401>

2 Komenda P, Lavallee B, Ferguson TW, Tangri N, Chartrand C, McLeod L, Gordon A, Dart A, Rigatto C. The Prevalence of CKD in Rural Canadian Indigenous Peoples: Results From the First Nations Community Based Screening to Improve Kidney Health and Prevent Dialysis (FINISHED) Screen, Triage, and Treat Program. *Am J Kidney Dis.* 2016 Oct;68(4):582-590. doi: 10.1053/j.ajkd.2016.04.014. Epub 2016 May 30. PMID: 27257016.

³ Canadian Institute for Health Information. Canadian Organ Replacement Register, 2014 to 2023: <https://www.cihi.ca/en/organ-replacement-in-canada-corr-annual-statistics> and Dialysis and pre-emptive kidney transplants data tables <https://www.cihi.ca/sites/default/files/document/dialysis-and-preemptive-kidney-transplant-2014-2023-data-tables-en.xlsx>

⁴ Canadian Institute for Health Information. Annual statistics on organ replacement in Canada, 2014 to 2023 www.cihi.ca/en/annual-statistics-on-organ-replacement-in-canada-2014-to-2023 and Canadian Institute for Health Information. Summary statistics on organ transplants, wait lists and donors. www.cihi.ca/en/summary-statistics-on-organ-transplants-wait-lists-and-donors



Sample email

Re: Help transform the lives of over 4 million Canadians affected by kidney disease

Dear [CANDIDATE NAME],

My name is [XXX] and I live in [suburb/town] in [electoral district]. I live with chronic kidney disease and am writing to alert you to the significant burden [dialysis/living with chronic kidney disease] places on myself and my family, as well as over 4 million other Canadians affected by this incurable disease. I support The Kidney Foundation of Canada in their work to prevent, diagnose, and treat kidney disease at its earliest stages. I hope you will join me.

Dialysis is the most common treatment for kidney disease, and it's an invasive, time-consuming treatment that takes up to five hours, three times a week. [Insert personal experience of the impact living with CKD or treating kidney disease on your or your family member or friend's life – 1 or 2 sentences]

If caught and treated early, kidney disease progression can be slowed or even prevented, and it can help patients avoid ever reaching dialysis. However, kidney disease is a silent disease that is often diagnosed very late because symptoms usually don't appear until it's very advanced. This is why early detection and treatment are critical.

As we approach the upcoming election, I urge you to commit to investing in prevention, early diagnosis, equitable access to treatment and ongoing kidney research. These investments are crucial to improving the lives of Canadians like me living with kidney disease. Your support can make a very significant difference to our lives.

For more information, please visit kidney.ca.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

[INSERT NAME]

[INSERT EMAIL ADDRESS]



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]

