

For immediate release:

Put seniors care in election platforms, byelection voters tell parties

Ottawa (Nov. 10, 2014) — All political parties should make seniors care a top priority in their platforms in the next federal election.

That's the verdict of the overwhelming majority of voters in the two federal byelections on Nov. 17, according to a poll conducted in the ridings of Yellowhead and Whitby-Oshawa recently.

Commissioned by the Canadian Medical Association (CMA), the poll found that nine in 10 voters (89 per cent) in the two ridings believed seniors care should be part of the campaign platforms of all parties in the next federal election.

"Canada's doctors have set out to make seniors care a ballot issue in the next federal election and it is very gratifying that our patients share this urgency," said Dr. Chris Simpson, CMA president.

"Canadians get it on the importance of seniors care and it's time politicians of all stripes got it too."

Yellowhead voters were 87.2 per cent in favour of making seniors care a top priority by the parties and 90.9 per cent were in Whitby-Oshawa.

The Nanos poll was conducted using land and cell phone lines Oct. 19 to Oct. 21. The sample included 200 respondents in each of the ridings. The total sample has a margin of error of plus or minus 5.0 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

"This poll is further evidence that what really matters to voters is their own well being and that of their loved ones whether it is health, the economy or their safety," said Nik Nanos, president of Nanos Research.

The results of the poll also had a pointed message for the federal government. Some 36 per cent of respondents in the two ridings thought Ottawa was doing a very poor job at preparing for the future health care needs of Canadians as they move into retirement. Thirty-nine per cent thought the federal performance was done an average job and just 22 per cent thought it was doing a good or very good job.

The poll also found very few Canadians prefer taxes being increased to manage seniors health (15 per cent). Canadians are more likely to support cuts in other areas (42 per cent) to fund seniors care or a tax sheltered savings plan (35 per cent) to help pay for care as they retire.

Currently, 5.2 million Canadians over age 65 account for almost 15 per cent of the population — and almost half of all health costs. By 2036 almost one in four Canadians will be over age 65.

Editors Note: The CMA, Unifor and the Royal Canadian Legion will be co-hosts tonight at a roundtable discussion in Whitby-Oshawa on the importance of seniors care. All byelection candidates have been invited. It will be held from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Science at 700 Gordon St., Whitby.

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