



What's the issue?

Over the next two decades, the numbers of Canadians aged 65-plus will double. Those 85 and over will quadruple.

Among the key factors that support healthy aging – the availability of appropriate health, social and community care providers. Having personnel with the knowledge needed to care for older Canadians is essential.

Some challenges

Shortage of professionals: There is clear evidence that geriatricians play a vital role in helping older adults to remain healthy and independent for as long as possible. Canada has one geriatrician for every 15,000 adults. That is unacceptable if our senior population is going to be able to age with dignity and receive the best health care.

Lack of training: Compared to other countries, Canada is falling behind in recognizing and preparing its health and social care professionals to meet the growing need for geriatric expertise. For virtually all these professions, there's no mandatory core and postgraduate training around understanding and managing the issues related to caring for older adults.

Pressures on health care costs: Older Canadians constitute about 16% of our population, but account for nearly half of our health and social care systems costs. An efficient and effective system will ensure the right care, at the right time, in the right place, by the right provider.

For more information: National Seniors Strategy <http://nationalseniorsstrategy.ca>

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Questions

- 1 How is your party supporting and encouraging mandated geriatric training for all health care professionals? What funding will it commit?
- 2 More incentives are required to support community-based geriatric facilities and placement of trainees. Such facilities will provide valuable real-life exposure to the geriatric population. Will your party consider a tax-deduction for contribution to research or education, or a grant to facilitate these types of inter-generational partnerships?
- 3 Including inter-generational studies in the secondary curriculum will promote an early interest in and understanding of geriatrics work. How can we encourage the Ministry of Education and school boards to support this discussion/initiative?



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AN IMPORTANT NOTE:

RTO/ERO has responded to some of these issues by establishing the charitable RTO/ERO Foundation in 2014, with geriatrics as a core area for granting. Among the Foundation's achievements:

- Created a permanent Chair in Geriatric Medicine at the University of Toronto, with \$3 million raised by RTO/ERO. Dr. Paula Rochon, the inaugural Chair, mentors students at the undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral levels.
- Funded dementia training through a grant to a Ryerson/McMaster joint project. Students from multiple disciplines (including medical, occupational therapy, physical therapy, nursing, nutrition, physician assistant and social work) participated in an online module and an in-person geriatric skills day workshop.
- Provided orthogeriatric training through a project at Mount Sinai Hospital. This mandatory two-week rotation focuses on the special peri-operative considerations in caring for complex frail older adults, followed by two weeks acquainting the surgery trainees with holistic geriatric medicine (issues such as frailty, recurrent falls, cognitive changes).