



**Association canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants retraités**  
**Canadian Association of Retired Teachers**

## **Time for a National Seniors Plan**

*To advocate for the development and implementation of a National Seniors Strategy was the ACER-CART number one priority in 2020-21, and the recent AGM approved that it be extended into 2021-22.*

ACER-CART members attending the virtual June 3<sup>rd</sup> Retiree Health event learned more about a National Seniors Strategy from one of Canada's strongest advocates for seniors, Dr. Samir Sinha. (<https://acer-cart.org/june3event>) But for many other Canadians, the question may be *What is a National Seniors Strategy?*

Seniors are the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population. Currently 15% of our population is aged 65 and older, and that number is expected to increase to 25% by 2056.

A comprehensive National Seniors Strategy with clear expectations and targeted funding has been put forth by the NIA (National Institute on Ageing). That proposal will guarantee basic rights for Canada's older population and ensure that their needs will be met.

Fourteen specific issues have been identified and addressed within a framework of four pillars that structure a National Seniors Strategy.

**Pillar 1: Empower Independent, Productive and Engaged Older Canadians by addressing:**

- ageism, elder abuse, and social isolation.
- access to affordable housing.
- improving income security for seniors.
- the creation of age-friendly communities, physical environments, and spaces.
- access to inclusive transportation.

**Pillar 2: Support Healthy and Active Lives as long as possible for Older Canadians by ensuring:**

- support for engagement in Wellness and Prevention Activities that will enable Healthy Ageing.

- access to Medically Necessary and appropriate Medications and Vaccines
- older Canadians and their caregivers are assisted to participate in informed Health Decision-Making & Advance Care Planning

Pillar 3: Provide Care Close to Home to deliver person-centered, high quality, integrated care as close to home as possible by care providers who have the knowledge and skills to care for Older Canadians by ensuring:

- access to appropriate, high quality Long-Term Care, Palliative, and End-of Life services
- Older Canadians have access to care providers who are trained to specifically provide the care needed.
- standardized metrics and accountability standards to enable a National Seniors Strategy
- the Needs of Older Adults are recognized and supported in Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Planning, Response, and Recovery Efforts.

Pillar 4: Support for Care Givers that acknowledges and supports the family and friends of older Canadians who provide unpaid care for their loved ones by ensuring:

- unpaid caregivers and older adults are supported in the workplace.
- unpaid caregivers are not unnecessarily penalized financially for taking on caregiving roles.

ACER-CART encourages participation in their letter campaign directed to elected officials at both the national and provincial levels. Help educate your elected officials on the issues currently facing seniors. Some may need the reminder that someday, they too may become seniors.

Strengthen your voice with a follow-up letter reaffirming why you has support this campaign. Ask them where they stand on supporting seniors. Are they prepared to support a change in legislation, especially around long-term care homes? What are they willing to do to support seniors?

The link to this *Calling for Action* campaign is located on the ACER-CART website [www.acer-cart.org](http://www.acer-cart.org)

For more information about the proposed National Seniors Strategy, go to the evidence briefs found at <http://www.nationalseniorsstrategy.ca>.

We understand that different levels of government have different responsibilities; however, we are calling on everyone to work together to achieve these goals. A National Seniors Strategy needs to be created and

activated as soon as possible to ensure appropriate care for our senior population.