

Date: May 28, 2025

Via Facsimile: 613-941-6900

**The Honourable Marjorie Michel, P.C., MP.**

Minister of Health  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Michel,

On behalf of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) and our 255,000+ members across Canada, we would like to sincerely congratulate you on your appointment as the Minister of Health.

As you know, older adults are the fastest-growing demographic in Canada. In 2023, 7.6 million Canadians were aged 65 and older. That number is expected to exceed 10.4 million by 2037, representing nearly a quarter of the population. This seismic demographic shift demands focused leadership, bold policy, and a deep commitment to ensuring older Canadians can age with dignity, security, and purpose. Yet, policy responses remain fragmented and under-resourced.

We are writing to urge your leadership and partnership on two of CARP's highest health priorities that matter most to older Canadians. As Canada's largest advocacy organization for seniors, our members are calling for bold coordinated federal action in the following areas: access to home and community care and universal vaccine coverage for seniors across jurisdictions.

**Home and Community Care**

A home-first approach to healthcare is the only way to meet the demands of Canada's rapidly aging population. Our hospitals and long-term care institutions are already stretched to their limits and were never designed to accommodate the scale of aging we now face. Most older Canadians want to age at home, and with the right supports in place, it is not only the preferred option—but also the most cost-effective and sustainable one. CARP calls for a coordinated national strategy, backed by targeted federal investment and collaboration with provinces and territories, to ensure that aging at home is not a privilege for the few, but the standard for all.

**Vaccine Access**

Seniors must have timely, barrier-free access to all expert-recommended vaccines, including those for COVID-19, shingles, senior-specific influenza, RSV, pneumonia, and other preventable illnesses. However, seniors face gaps in vaccine access as coverage varies by province/territory, leaving many at risk. We urge your ministry to ensure publicly funded and consistent coverage across provinces and territories for older adults nationwide. Access to these vaccines is essential to supporting healthy aging.

### **National Pharmacare & Dental care**

CARP recognizes the recent expansion of national pharmacare and dental care programs as a welcome advancement in senior care in Canada as these programs have the potential to significantly reduce out-of-pocket healthcare costs for older Canadians on fixed incomes. However, as with any new initiative, focused attention is needed to ensure effective rollout, address gaps in coverage, and respond swiftly to implementation challenges. CARP urges your ministry to prioritize the needs of seniors within these programs to ensure they are accessible, responsive, and equitable access across all provinces and territories.

We believe your ministry is positioned to help lead these reforms. As such, we urge you to work with CARP to develop policy responses and federal commitment that reflect the demographic urgency and the lived realities of our aging population. Minister Michel, this is your opportunity to lead boldly and leave a lasting legacy for Canada's aging population. Our members are engaged, informed, and active—nearly 95% vote in federal elections. They expect a government that not only listens but acts decisively.

Achieving these outcomes and reforms will require strong collaboration across ministries. In particular, we urge you to work closely with other Cabinet Ministers such as the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and the Secretary of State for Seniors to ensure adequate, sustained funding is allocated to support home care infrastructure and equitable vaccine coverage for seniors across jurisdictions. These are not simply healthcare issues – they are foundational to economic stability and social equity for an aging population.

Attached is a backgrounder outlining the importance of home care and community care and vaccine access for seniors in greater detail, as well as our recommendations. We welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your staff to explore how we can work together to support the health and dignity of Canada's aging population.

We are also copying this letter to the Honourable Stephanie McLean, Secretary of State (Seniors) for continuity of dialogue.

Thank you for your attention and commitment to public service. We look forward to your response and leadership.

Yours sincerely,



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