

ELECTION 2019

Public Health Matters

CPHA is encouraging voters to question their local candidates on some key public health issues. We have an opportunity to challenge all candidates to set a higher standard for Canadians. We should not be satisfied with rehearsed answers that lack depth. We need to hold the candidates themselves to a higher standard and expect more from them.

Core housing need

Canada needs a federal government that is committed to sustained investment in public health across the country. CPHA calls on the next federal government to invest in strategies and programs that support strong healthy people in Canada regardless of their economic and social status.

A HIGHER STANDARD FOR CANADIAN FAMILIES

About 11% of Canadian households are in [core housing need](#), with affordability being the single greatest contributor. The proportion of people in core housing need, however, varies by region and population, with greatest concern associated with those living in the North, Indigenous communities, and major urban centres such as Toronto and Vancouver. There is a direct link between the availability of adequate, affordable housing and the health of the population. The [federal government](#) has taken steps to address the housing needs of Canadians through its National Housing Strategy which has a goal of, over the next decade, removing: "...530,000 families from housing need, cut chronic homelessness by 50% and change the face of housing in Canada forever." Steps must to be taken to ensure that these promises are met.

It's time for Canada to do better.

CALL TO ACTION

CPHA is calling on the next federal government to continue leadership in working with provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples' governance organizations to:

- Fully implement the National Housing Strategy and housing policies that address all aspects of core housing need throughout the country;
- Support the Indigenous Housing Strategy such that it is developed and implemented by Indigenous Peoples and reflects their needs; and
- Provide adequate funding to respond specifically to those populations and regions that are in the greatest core housing need, while fostering equitable approaches to meet the developing needs in the rest of the country.

#PublicHealthMatters



CANADIAN
PUBLIC HEALTH
ASSOCIATION

The Voice of Public Health

WHY IT MATTERS

There is a [relationship between health outcomes, and the availability, affordability and quality of housing](#). Poor housing conditions have been linked to: increased morbidity from infectious diseases, including respiratory illness; poor mental health; chronic illness; and injury. For example, damp and mouldy housing is associated with asthma and other respiratory conditions, while overcrowding can lead to the spread of infectious disease, and may adversely affect mental wellness. Poor sanitation can result in gastrointestinal illness. Similarly, individuals with low income will spend a greater proportion of their income on housing, while living in substandard residences. As a result, injuries may occur due to these substandard conditions and a lack of resources to repair them. Unaffordable housing also leaves limited funds to spend on healthy living or non-insured medical expenses.

The national housing strategy allows for collaboration among provinces and territories, municipalities, Indigenous Peoples' governmental organizations, and the private sector to tailor solutions to [meet the needs of specific regions and populations](#). However, we must ensure that the solution is equitable and addresses all aspects of core housing need for all populations and regions in Canada.

In 2006, 12.7% of households in Canada were identified as being in [core housing need](#) compared to an estimate of 12.5% in 2011 and 11% in 2016. Those in greatest need included: 26.4% of renters, 50.4% of low-income households, 26.2% of single parents, 21.6% of one-person households, and 29.6% of recent immigrants. This need is not distributed equally throughout the country, or between populations. It is greatest in Nunavut, where 39.2% of the population live in core housing need, and is generally higher in Canada's North. [Of those living in the North](#), 63.5% in core housing need did not meet the suitability standard. Core housing need is also greater among Indigenous populations – both on- and off-reserve – than among non-Indigenous groups. Nationally, the housing standard most commonly unmet is affordability. In 2011, of those who fell into core housing need, 73.3% were below the housing affordability standard. The [National Housing Strategy Survey](#) identified affordability as one of the most important housing challenges.

QUESTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES

1. Do you support safe, affordable and appropriate housing for all Canadians?
2. Is your party committed to maintaining and enhancing the National Housing Strategy?
3. What will your party do to improve the core housing need for Canadians?
4. What will your party do to improve the core housing of Indigenous Peoples?
5. What specific steps will your party take to comply with the Calls for Justice related to housing in the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls?

RESOURCES

- [CCPH21 Position Statement: Core Housing Need](#)
- [Housing Services Corporation: Canada's Social and Affordable Housing Landscape](#)

ABOUT CPHA

Founded in 1910, the Canadian Public Health Association is the independent voice for public health in Canada with links to the international community. As the only Canadian non-governmental organization focused exclusively on public health, we are uniquely positioned to advise decision-makers about public health system reform and to guide initiatives to help safeguard the personal and community health of Canadians and people around the world. We are a national, independent, not-for-profit, voluntary association. Our members believe in universal and equitable access to the basic conditions which are necessary to achieve health for all.