

# What Can We Do?

*Even in a time of physical distancing, there are many ways to affect change. Please creatively adapt these ideas to your own health and community circumstances.*

## Engage with Others in your Community

- Talk with friends, family and neighbours
- Hold a physically distanced discussion group in your backyard or the park
- Invite others who connect using technology to join you in video conferencing (Zoom, Facetime, etc.)
- Make use of social media to share articles, stories, pictures and posts

## Engage with Local Community Leaders

- Take note of stories and articles in your newspapers that are relevant to aging in Saskatchewan (e.g. stories, local decisions that affect older adults)
  - › Respond by writing letters to the editor
  - › Offer your story for publication
- Invite them to consider becoming an Age-Friendly Community
- Phone or text your mayor and/or councillors to make your views known
- Have a chat with local officials whenever you encounter them – at the grocery store, post office, or in the driveway (maintaining appropriate distancing!)
- Participate in town hall meetings or forums

## Engage with Provincial Politicians

- MLAs and candidates are interested in talking with constituents
  - › Send them an email
  - › Make an appointment for a phone conversation
  - › Schedule a video conference with you and one or two others – this is especially helpful if you are a bit nervous about approaching alone
- It is always helpful to have some specific local examples; your personal experiences and stories will have the most effect
- Make sure your conversations are focused on one or two main areas
- Write a letter to your MLA/candidate/the Premier/Leader of the Opposition – **there is a sample letter on the back of this sheet**
  - › **Make sure you include your own examples**



Dear xxxx, Candidate for xxx Party,

I am writing about an important concern for me and for older adults in Saskatchewan.

Do you know that by 2038 between one in five and one in four Saskatchewan residents will be age 65 or older? As an older adult, I am very concerned that the current and past governments have done very little planning for this important change in our demographic make-up.

Since 2018 SSM, the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism, has undertaken research that identified the key themes and issues of concern to older adults. These are:

- Increasing capacity within Government for the development and implementation of a comprehensive seniors strategy
- Improving transportation systems to ensure older adults can meet their basic needs and participate in community life
- Ensuring appropriate and affordable housing is available in their communities
- Providing accessible and affordable services to enable older adults to stay in their homes as long as they are able
- Having access to primary health care and specialists as required
- Having adequate income and affordable services
- Feeling safe in one's home and community and avoiding isolation

The COVID-19 Pandemic has revealed how fragile the systems to protect seniors are. The impacts for older adults can be seen in all of these areas of concern and highlight the need for better planning for this important segment of our society.

This is an important concern for me because.....[insert your own comments/examples]

While the appointment of a Minister Responsible for Seniors in 2019 is an important step towards recognizing the concerns of this growing part of our population, I note that the Ministry is not actually resourced as a department, being combined with the portfolio of Rural and Remote Health within the Department of Health. We need more than a nominal commitment. We need a plan. If your party is elected to form government, what will you do to increase resources for this important file and what will you do to initiate a process to develop a Positive Aging Strategy for Saskatchewan in collaboration with older adults, community leaders and experts?

**Contact information can be found at:**

**Current MLAs <https://www.legassembly.sk.ca/mlas/>**

**A list of Candiates (as they become known) <https://www.elections.sk.ca/>**