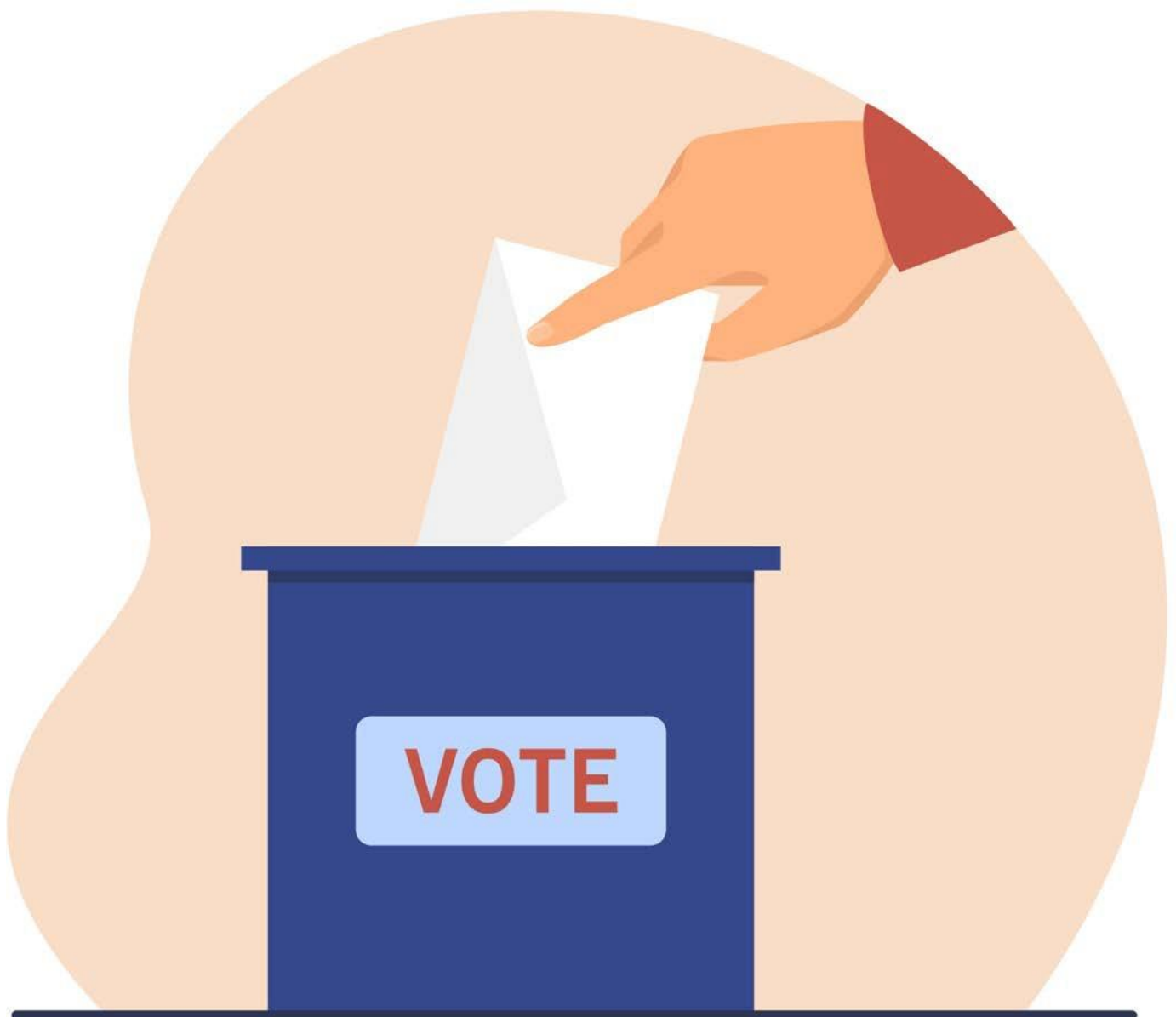


PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND 2023 ELECTION TOOLKIT



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2023 PEI ELECTION TOOLKIT OVERVIEW

Those in PEI are heading to the polls and in the lead up to this election we are asking you, the members of the PEI Parkinson's community, to reach out to your electoral candidates and call on them to prioritize Parkinson's. It is time PEI recognizes that the province's healthcare outcomes need improvement, and this is the opportunity to have your voice heard!

This toolkit provides you with a step-by-step guide on how to effectively engage with elected officials and candidates, some key information and data on Parkinson's and the current realities of healthcare in PEI, and with some key strategic asks.

STEP 1:

Get Prepared



An overview of Parkinson's in Canada

Parkinson's disease has the fastest growing rates of death and disability compared to other neurological disorders such as dementias, MS, and stroke. It is estimated there are more than 100,000 people in Canada living with Parkinson's and that number will grow by about 30 people tomorrow and the day after, until we reach 50 new diagnoses per day within 10 years.

An overview of Parkinson's in PEI

More than 400 of the 100,000 Canadians living with Parkinson's are in the province of PEI. The provincial average wait time to meet with a Parkinson's specialist is two years and patients must travel to Nova Scotia for a diagnosis. Many Parkinson-specific services are centralized to urban regions posing geographical access barriers to residents in rural areas.

Many Those in PEI living with Parkinson's are required to pay out of pocket for critical healthcare services. It is estimated more than 50 per cent of individuals pay out of pocket for exercise programs and physiotherapy, and 25 per cent of individuals report paying a portion of their medication costs out of pocket. Furthermore, more than 50 per cent of care partners in PEI feel they do not have sufficient access to information or resources to properly care for the person with Parkinson's in their lives.

It is very important that we make our elected officials aware of the urgency of improving healthcare outcomes for people with Parkinson's and their care partners.

Parkinson Canada Advocacy Roundtables

The 2021 Parkinson Canada Roundtable Series (<https://www.parkinson.ca/the-2021-advocacy-roundtable-reports-are-now-available/?highlight=roundtable%20reports>) consisted of eight regional roundtables, including one in the Atlantic, and a national session. This effort brought together more than 150 voices from the Canadian Parkinson's community to gather understanding, insight, and clarity around healthcare realities and how to support Parkinson Canada's advocacy efforts. People living with Parkinson's, care partners, healthcare professionals, and regional Parkinson's organizations were invited to participate.

The Atlantic Roundtable Report (<https://www.parkinson.ca/wp-content/uploads/PS-AtlanticRegion-FinalReport-AUG2022-V01.pdf>) summarizes the unique realities faced by the PEI and Atlantic Parkinson's communities and identifies key priorities to better improve their overall health and quality of life.

Key Priorities Around Parkinson's Healthcare Realities in PEI:

1) Wait Times:

- The prolonged wait times to see a Parkinson's specialist and receive a diagnosis (two-year average) have serious implications for an individual's quality of life and increase the likelihood for both physical and mental health deterioration.

2) Model of Care:

- Integrated health care comprises a multidisciplinary, non-invasive approach involving mental health support, nutritional support, exercise/physiotherapy, and language or speech support that helps in the holistic well-being of people living with Parkinson's.
- Currently, there is no consistent model of care in PEI.

3) Access to Care:

- There is no Parkinson's specialist in PEI and those requiring care must travel to Nova Scotia. Furthermore, Parkinson-specific services are centralized to urban regions, posing geographical access barriers to residents in remote areas.
- Many individuals also experience financial barriers to care, having to pay out-of-pocket in some part for medication, speech therapy, physiotherapy, and exercise classes.

These priorities will provide a roadmap to the organization in developing our future advocacy work in supporting those in PEI affected by Parkinson's.



STEP 2:

Identify your Member of the Legislative Assembly and Candidates

To find your electoral district, your Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), their parliamentary roles, and more, visit: <https://www.electionspei.ca/provincial-elections/feature/find-voting-locationcandidates#/service/ProvincialElectionInfo/ProvincialElectionInfoSearch>

To find your riding's candidates, voting locations, how to register, and accessibility services available, please visit: <https://www.electionspei.ca/>.

MLAs often have additional parliamentary responsibilities or appointments, including being named a cabinet minister or member of a committee. These are of special interest as your MLA may have a closer connection to an issue and may potentially be in a better position of influence. For example, parliamentary responsibilities relating to health, finance, disability, or seniors would be of special interest to the Parkinson's Community.



STEP 3:

Get Involved

Engage with your MLA and Candidates

Here are a few ways you can get involved and have your voice heard by the government:

1. Visit www.parkinson.ca/election for further information and send a letter directly to your electoral candidates.
2. Connect with your MLA, electoral candidate, and key ministers through social media, using the #PrioritizePD hashtag. See some examples below.
3. Meet with your MLA or candidates in-person, virtually, or by phone to share your message.
4. Write a letter or email to your MLA, electoral candidates, and key ministers. See templates and letter writing tips below.
5. Follow your MLA or candidate on social media and subscribe to their newsletters to familiarize yourself with their activities and priorities.

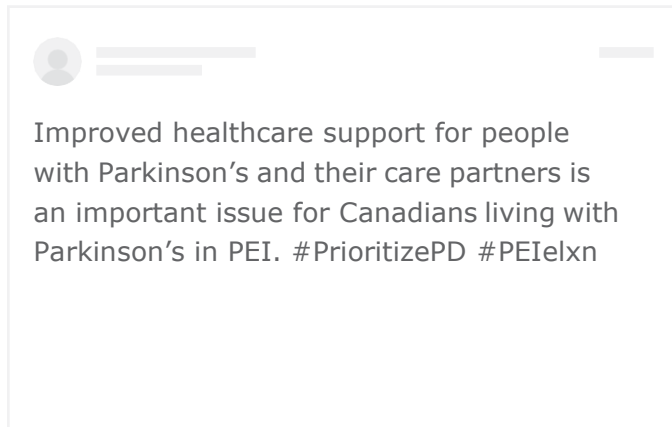
Strategic Asks for Your Member of the Legislative Assembly/Candidates

The objective of the meetings is to build a relationship with the MLA or candidate while raising awareness about Parkinson's and to find areas of shared priorities.

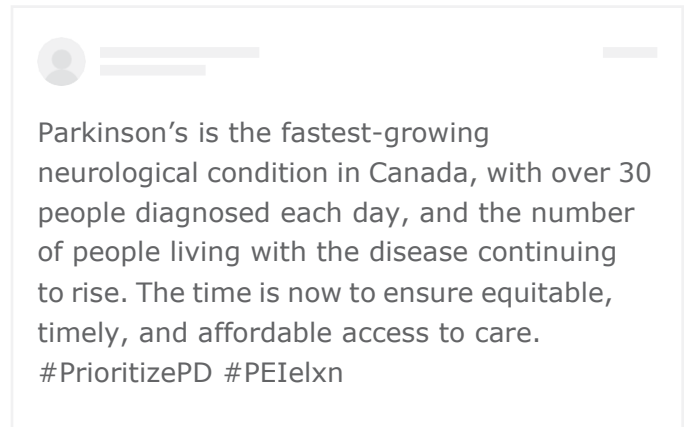
1. Request that the MLA/Candidate show their support for what you have discussed by sharing a message on social media emphasizing the importance of improving healthcare for those in PEI with Parkinson's, using the #PrioritizePD hashtag.
2. Ask the MLA/Candidate to learn more about Parkinson's. A great place for them to start is our website www.parkinson.ca or by emailing advocacy@parkinson.ca.
3. Request that the MLA/Candidate share what they have learned around the need for improved healthcare outcomes for those in PEI with Parkinson's with their party and in government.
4. Ask what their top priorities will be if elected and how can Parkinson Canada and you, as a constituent, help them accomplish these.
5. Ask what measures their party intends to take for those in PEI to have equitable access to care across the province.
6. Ask how their party intends to improve specialist wait times in PEI.

SOCIAL MEDIA POST EXAMPLES

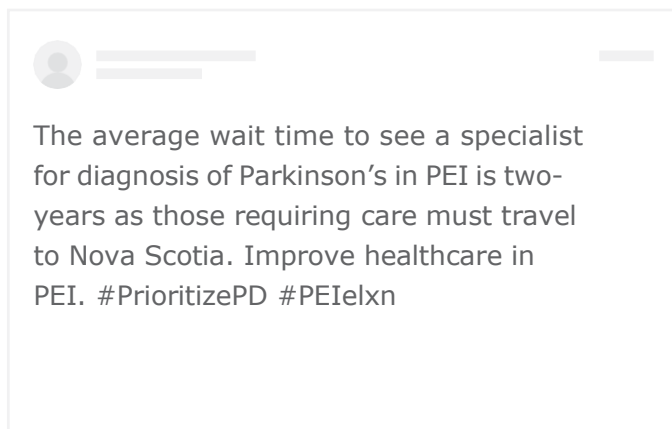
Facebook and LinkedIn



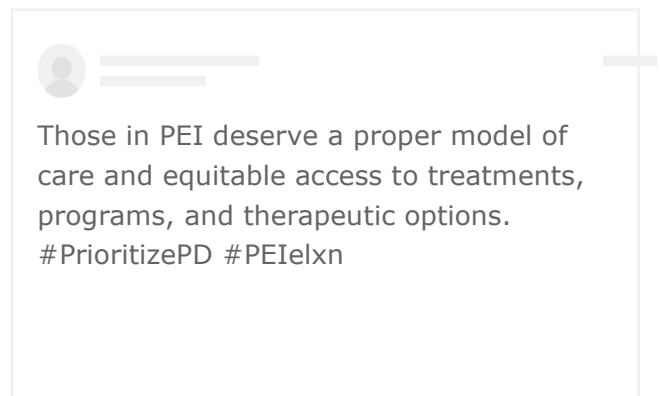
Improved healthcare support for people with Parkinson's and their care partners is an important issue for Canadians living with Parkinson's in PEI. #PrioritizePD #PEIelxn



Parkinson's is the fastest-growing neurological condition in Canada, with over 30 people diagnosed each day, and the number of people living with the disease continuing to rise. The time is now to ensure equitable, timely, and affordable access to care. #PrioritizePD #PEIelxn

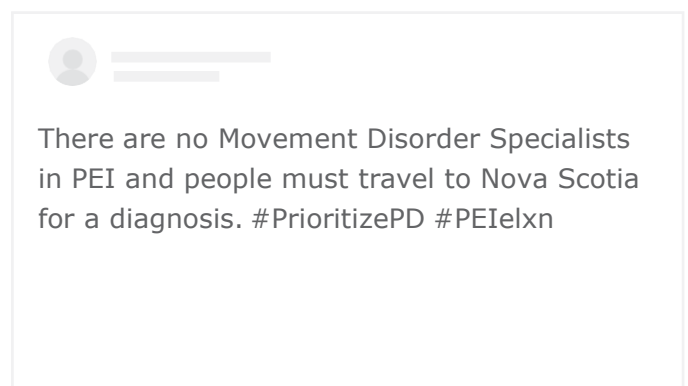
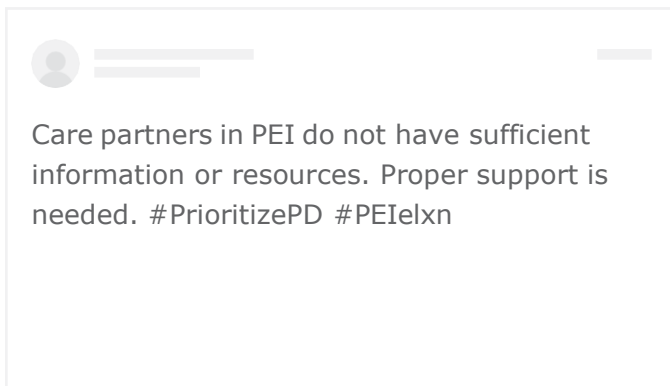
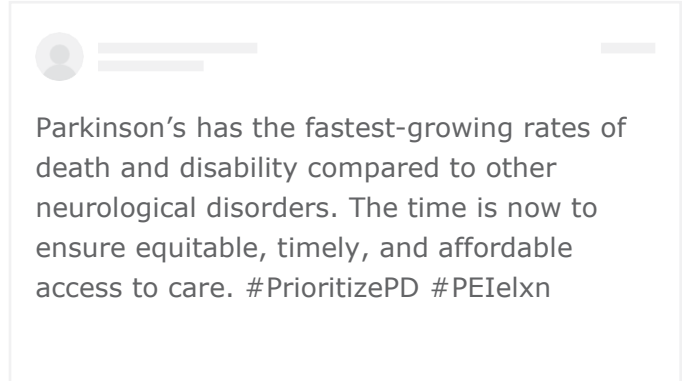
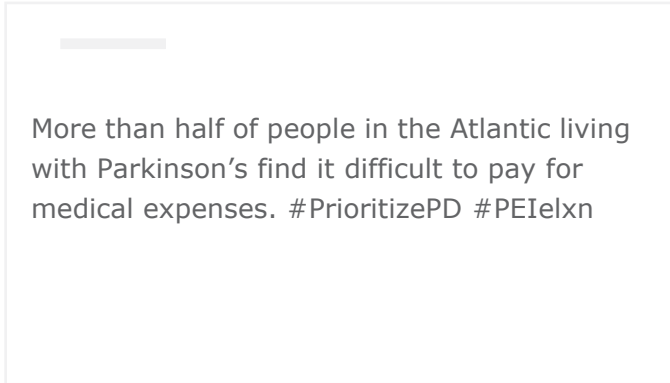


The average wait time to see a specialist for diagnosis of Parkinson's in PEI is two-years as those requiring care must travel to Nova Scotia. Improve healthcare in PEI. #PrioritizePD #PEIelxn



Those in PEI deserve a proper model of care and equitable access to treatments, programs, and therapeutic options. #PrioritizePD #PEIelxn

Twitter and Instagram Stories



Considerations When Interacting with Your MLAs/Candidates

1. MLAs and candidates are very busy during elections as they are meeting with as many constituents as possible. Be prepared and expect to have 15-30 minutes with the official.
2. Meetings are not the only way to get time with an MLA/Candidate. Check the news or the candidates' website for local events they will be attending. Sign up for their local newsletters to receive updates on their activities.
3. As a charitable organization, Parkinson Canada is nonpartisan. When advocating on our behalf, please refrain from showing support or favour for one party over another.

Template Agenda for Meeting with MLAs/Candidates

1. Introductions

- Share your connection to Parkinson's.
- Ask if they have a connection to Parkinson's.

2. Parkinson's in PEI and Request

- Share key information and data on Parkinson's by highlighting some main points.
- Request their commitment to make Parkinson's a priority to ensure that improved healthcare is seen as important.
- Make it personal by providing your main points on why this is important as it relates to your personal experience.

3. Questions to ask your MLA/Candidates

- How do you and your team intend to improve the lives of Those in PEI living with Parkinson's?
- Can I count on you to make Parkinson's a priority?
- Will you share this support publicly by posting on social media with the #PrioritizePD hashtag?
- Will you write a letter to your electoral candidate and key ministers requesting that Parkinson's be urgently addressed as a healthcare priority?

4. Thank them for their time and let them know you will follow up!

Don't forget to let us know how your meeting went at advocacy@parkinson.ca

Sample Emails to MLAs/Candidates

1. Use this email template for meeting requests:

Hello Minister/MLA _____,

My name is _____. I am a resident in your riding of _____. I have been [living with Parkinson's disease for X years/month/caring for my_____ with Parkinson's for X years/months]. During this time, I have experienced [add personal challenges with accessing care/services].

As a supporter of the Parkinson's community and in partnership with Parkinson Canada, I am requesting to meet with you to discuss the need for the government to make Parkinson's a priority and commit to improving healthcare for those in PEI in the Parkinson's community.

Thank you in advance for your response. I look forward to meeting with you.

[Signed]

[Your Address]

2. Use this email template if you are unable to meet with your elected official but would like to share your story and requests with them:

Hello Minister/MLA _____,

My name is _____. I am a resident in your riding of _____. I have been [living with Parkinson's disease for X years/month/caring for my_____ with Parkinson's for X years/months].

During this time, I have experienced [add personal challenges with accessing care/services].

As a supporter of the Parkinson's community and in partnership with Parkinson Canada, I am requesting to meet with you to discuss the need for the government to make Parkinson's a priority and commit to improving healthcare for the Parkinson's community.

I would like you to consider the following questions:

How do you intend to improve the lives of those in PEI living with Parkinson's in your role?

What measures does your party intend to take for those in PEI to have equitable access to care across the province?

How does your party intend to improve specialist wait times in PEI? Can I count on you to commit to making Parkinson's a priority?

Will you write a letter to your electoral candidate and key ministers requesting that Parkinson's be urgently addressed as a healthcare priority?

What advice or feedback do you have for us to have our request for improved healthcare move forward?

Thank you in advance for your response.

[Signed]

[Your Address]

Tips for Writing an Effective Letter and Emails to MLAs/Candidates

Address your letter correctly. Be sure you have the correct address and salutation in your letter.

Always start by writing to your local elected official or candidate. Elected officials are most interested in your concerns when they represent you.

Only address one issue per letter. Being concise on one specific topic will make for a quicker and more impactful ask and response.

Be accurate. Beware of false or misleading information. Always double-check if you are not sure!

Make a specific ask. Make sure to ask your elected official or candidate to act. Whether it is asking for a meeting, a phone call, to support a bill, or a current initiative; always ask for their position on the issue you are addressing.

Make it personal. Share your story and how it affects you. Tie in your own experience and expertise using your own words.

Be polite and courteous. Rudeness or aggressiveness is sure to alienate the reader.

Be concise. Keep your letter as short as possible to ensure that your message is fully read.

Include your return address in your letter. Even in an email, always include your address so that the elected official knows that you live in the riding they represent. Make sure your MLA/Candidate knows how to reach you and include your phone number if you are comfortable.

Express appreciation. Thank them for their time and consideration and add a note about another initiative that they may have taken part in to show that you are following their activities.

Follow up. Elected officials and candidates are busy and it may take weeks to respond. Follow up via phone or email to confirm that they received your letter if you have not received a timely response. When you do receive a response, send a follow-up thank-you letter and ask follow-up questions if they provided unsatisfactory responses. Follow-up letters often have a much larger impact than the initial communication as the elected official will recognize the importance of the issue to you.



When addressing correspondence to Dignitaries, please reference the proper styles:

Dignitary	Salutation	In Conversation
<p>Premier or Cabinet Minister The Honorable (full name), Minister of _____/ Premier of PEI</p> <p>Note: The Premier and/or Cabinet Minister does not keep the title of "The Honourable" after leaving office. A Premier will only retain the title of "The Honourable" for life if they are made a member of the Queen's Privy Council by the federal government.</p>	<p>Dear Minister/Premier _____(last name)</p>	<p>Minister/Premier _____, (last name)</p>
<p>Members of the Legislative Assembly _____ (first and last name), MLA</p> <p>Or</p> <p>The Honorable _____ (first and last name), MLA</p> <p>Note: MLAs do not keep the title of "The Honourable" after leaving office. A Premier will only retain the title of "The Honourable" for life if they are made a member of the Queen's Privy Council by the federal government.</p>	<p>Dear MLA/last name</p>	<p>MLA/last name</p>

ABOUT PARKINSON CANADA

At Parkinson Canada, people living with Parkinson's are at the centre of everything we do. We empower the Parkinson's community through tailored programs and services, innovative research and raising the voice of Canadians impacted by Parkinson's.

A national registered charity, Parkinson Canada can't help Canadians impacted by Parkinson's without the generosity of donors.

<https://www.parkinson.ca/>

