

## **Are the federal election candidates voting for you?**

By: Colleen Maloney

The writ has been dropped. Canadians will go to the ballot box on June 28<sup>th</sup>. Liberal, Conservative, New Democrat and Bloc Québécois candidates are on the move putting their best foot forward as they head out on the election trail. Election teams, radio and television advertisements, lawn signs and platform brochures outlining the Party's ideals, support them. All have been ready for weeks. And we need to be ready for them.

The CAPA Steering Committee and The Arthritis Society have put together plans for a joint arthritis awareness effort for the election – an arthritis platform. The objective is to increase the visibility of arthritis key issues and increase political will relating to health care policy relevant to people with arthritis.

The key planks in our platform are:

- Access to Medications
- Cross-border Internet Pharmacy
- Access to Care
- Accelerated Arthritis Research.

When the candidates knock on our door asking for our support, we need to know if they support our arthritis platform. Are they voting for us?

*Tell the candidates* that you want a federal government that will improve upon timely access to safe, effective, and affordable medications to all Canadians through a federal drug review and approval process that is efficient, well resourced, rigorous and comprehensive.

*Tell the candidates* that Cross-border Internet pharmacies must be banned to protect Canadians' supply of and access to prescription medications when they need them. Health Canada must act now to enforce regulations prohibiting cross-border Internet pharmacies.

*Tell the candidates* that the federal government needs to increase health care funding to the provinces. Timely access to care can be obtained through recruiting, training and retaining health care professionals in rheumatology and orthopaedic care. Timely access to care means reducing wait lists for joint replacement surgery.

*Tell the candidates* that the federal government must increase public and political commitment to arthritis research, without which new and better solutions to containing the human and economic cost of this disease will remain beyond our reach.

*Tell the candidates* that you will vote for them **if** they will vote for arthritis.