



Families want ADHD to be an Ontario election issue but need help finding their voices

Toronto, ON -May 11, 2022:

To help the more than 500,000 Ontarians who live with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) effectively engage with candidates in the upcoming provincial election, the Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC) has released an election toolkit. The toolkit contains key facts, questions, and strategies for talking with candidates.

“There is so much public misinformation about ADHD that it continues to lead to an unfair judgment against those who live with it,” said Heid Bernhardt, Director, Education, and Advocacy, CADDAC. “Families and individuals living with ADHD are often reluctant to identify as neurodiverse, are afraid of stigma and end up staying silent about their challenges in school, workplaces and the medical system. This has led our politicians to believe ADHD isn’t an election issue - but it is.”

In a 2020 survey conducted by CADDAC, 85% of parents of children with ADHD stated that they wanted ADHD to be a top Ontario election issue. It is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders in childhood, impacting at least two children in every Ontario classroom. Educators are untrained in supporting the learning needs of students with ADHD, and there is no consistency across Ontario school boards in if or how the needs of students are met.

Inequities are also prevalent in Ontario workplaces, with four out of every 100 employees identifying with ADHD. Most employers are unaware that ADHD is a recognized disability by the Ontario Human Rights Commission and therefore requires accommodation. Without support, employees with ADHD are more likely to earn less, be laid off, be fired, or quit their job compared to neurotypical individuals.

Yet getting an ADHD diagnosis is difficult. Wait times for an adult assessment can be over two years. Most family physicians, and many adult psychiatrists, remain untrained in ADHD. Ontario’s mental health hospital clinics do not see adults with ADHD. Girls and women, in particular, remain undiagnosed or misdiagnosed. A recent CADDAC survey found that 46% of women were first misdiagnosed with another mental health disorder leading to a delay in their treatment of two or more decades. Shockingly, one in four women with ADHD in Canada have attempted suicide.

“We want to support families and individuals by helping them to find their voices with candidates,” said Bernhardt. “Political decision-makers need to know that with access to

appropriate treatment and support, individuals living with ADHD can have similar health, social and career outcomes as neurotypical individuals.”

The toolkit can be downloaded from the CADDAC website, and videos and e-mail templates are also available.

About CADDAC

CADDAC is a national charity that improves the lives of Canadians affected by ADHD through awareness, education, and advocacy. For more information visit caddac.ca

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