

October 24th is coming. That's when cities across Ontario elect their councillors and mayors. That's when you choose the people who will govern your city and influence your daily life. It's an important date.

When we think of health services, we often think first of our provincial and territorial governments. They establish the policies and programs for the services we use. But that's only part of the story.

Let's look behind the scenes. Health services can't work in an unhealthy environment, and here is where the municipalities come in. People can't be healthy if they don't have enough food or a safe and comfortable place to live, or if they are afraid to go outside, or if they can't get where they need to go.

Our cities are responsible for many of the services that directly affect all of us. They contribute to hospital costs, operate some long-term care homes, and control or influence a wide range of services.

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Here are some examples.

- **Public health units**, which work to prevent illness and keep communities healthy
- **Emergency services** (such as paramedics, ambulances, and firefighting)
- **Housing** – the zoning laws that control the amounts and types of housing being built
- **Neighbourhood safety** (police forces)
- **Community support services** - meals, homemaking, assisted housing, and adult day programs
- **Transportation** - public transit, roads, safe crosswalks and sidewalks, and access to public spaces
- **Recreation and leisure** - local libraries, parks, and community centres and programs
- **Settlement services** – for newcomers
- **Information and education** - about local services, safety, ageism, and elder abuse

Provincial and municipal governments jointly fund some of these services. When provincial government funding isn't enough, municipalities often close the gap. They need to know which services you want to maintain and protect, so it's time to step up.

Voting is critical, but there are other ways to be heard. You can speak up, ask questions, and add your voice to public debates. You can attend meetings; talk with family members, friends and neighbours; and question the candidates who come to your door.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **Get ready to vote.** You can find more information here. <https://settlement.org/ontario/immigration-citizenship/canadian-government/voting/a-guide-to-voting-in-your-municipal-election/>
- **Think about what's important to you**, and then ask candidates what they will do about those things and how they will provide those services.
- **Check our website** for some information about the elections and for what candidates have been telling us. <https://carewatchontario.com/elections-2022/municipal-election-2022/>

Ask, think, and then vote!

We welcome and appreciate donations to support our advocacy work. However, we are not a registered charity, so we can't issue tax receipts for donations. To donate, please go to: <https://carewatchontario.com/get-involved/donate>.

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