

April 2018

Getting Involved in the Ontario Election: A toolkit for AOHC members

Introduction

The provincial election will be on June 7th — let's take advantage of this opportunity to talk to candidates about the need to invest in primary health care so that CHCs, AHACs, NLPCs and CFHTs can keep doing great work keeping people healthy and well in our communities.

How can we do this?

- Share basic information with staff, community members and the people visiting your Centre on when and where to vote. Stick this information on bulletin boards in reception areas and bring it to group sessions.
- Make sure people visiting your Centre know the importance of voting. Check out the party platforms and share information by email or on bulletin boards when a party comments on healthcare issues.
- Ask questions of your local candidates- send them an email, attend an all candidates meeting, and ask when they canvas your home if they will commit to investing in primary health care teams like Community Health Centres.
- Engage on social media
- Send an opinion editorial to your local paper raising the issues we want candidates to address
- If there doesn't seem to be a local all candidates meeting, get together with partner organizations and organize one before June 7.

Let us know at AOHC what you are hearing...

- Let us know if the party leaders are coming to your CHC, AHAC, NPLC, or CFHT.
- Let us know of any significant promises by your local candidates on health and wellbeing issues.
- Keep us informed if your local candidates make a statement of support in public forums that we can quote.
- Email us at jacquie@aohc.org

Questions to ask your local candidates

- Interprofessional primary health care teams keep people healthy and out of hospital emergency rooms. Community Health Centres, Aboriginal Health Access Centres, Nurse Practitioner- Led Clinics and Community Family Health Teams provide community-governed primary health care to the most vulnerable people in our communities.
If your party wins the election will you increase investment in interprofessional primary care teams?
- We are a core part of the primary health care sector, but Community Health Centres, Aboriginal Health Access Centres, Nurse Practitioner- Led Clinics and Community Family Health Teams have had their budgets frozen for five years. Many have had to cut programs and services to vulnerable people, and lay off staff.
Will your party commit to a one-time 5% increase in base funding for community-governed primary health care teams?
- Research shows that poverty is the leading cause of poor health and health inequities. Our Health Centres provide health care to many people living on low incomes who cannot afford healthy food, prescription medicines and dental care.
If your party wins the election will you expand pharmacare so that everyone has access to affordable prescription drugs? Will you expand public dental programs so that everyone has access to oral health care?
- Ontario is facing an overdose crisis with 1,053 people dying from opioid overdoses in the first six months of last year. We believe the response to this public health issue must be framed within a harm reduction approach that seeks to minimize the harms associated with drug use through services such as overdose prevention sites and supervised consumption services.
What steps would your party take if elected to deal with the overdose crisis?
- 1 in every 5 people in Ontario face barriers getting primary health care services. Indigenous People, people with disabilities and mental health challenges, racialized groups, people who are LGBTQ and people living in rural and remote communities face the biggest barriers to health care. Community Health Centres and Aboriginal Health Access Centres help address these barriers by delivering both primary health care and community development services based on local needs.
Would your party commit to expanding the network of community-governed primary health care centres?

Social Media

Established hashtags to monitor (and use where appropriate):

#ONpoli
#ONhealth
#ONDental
#pharmacare
#mentalhealth

Election hashtags still emerging (we will provide more guidance when writ drops):

#voteON (this was the dominant hashtag during the last couple of election cycles)
#OntarioElection2018
#OntarioVotes2018
#ONelxn
#Ontario2018

Party name hashtags (if talking specific party platforms/policies, good for shorthand):

#ONDP (NDP)
#PCPO (PC)
#OLP (Liberal)
#GPO (Green Party)

Be mindful that more generic tags, such as “election2018” or “vote2018” are being dominated by the U.S. midterm elections and should be avoided.

Template Opinion Editorial

- When the writ drops, watch for a template “Invest in Community” op-ed that you can customize easily and submit to your local media outlets to keep our election asks on the agenda at the local level

Find your local candidates

- You can find your local candidates by visiting:
 - PC Party: https://www.ontariopc.ca/our_candidates
 - Liberal Party: <https://www.ontarioliberal.ca/candidates?l=EN>
 - NDP: <https://www.ontariondp.ca/candidates>
 - Green Party: <https://gpo.ca/find-candidate/>

Information on Voting

Share information on where and when to vote with people who are visiting your CHC, AHAC, NPLC, CFHT

Get registered to vote

<https://www.elections.on.ca/en.html> or call 1-888-668-8683

Find which riding you are in

<https://www.elections.on.ca/en/voting-in-ontario/electoral-districts.html>

Find out where you vote

If your name and address are on the Voters List, you will receive a Voter Information Card by mail. It will tell you where to vote on election day and advance poll locations. Bring that and one piece of ID with you on June 7.

Websites for Party Platforms

Check out and share what the main parties are saying:

- Progressive Conservatives <https://www.ontariopc.ca/>
- Liberals <http://www.ontarioliberal.ca/>
- New Democratic Party <http://ontariondp.com/>
- Green Party <http://www.gpo.ca/>

All Candidates Meetings

- ✓ Attend an All Candidates Meeting in your community.
- ✓ Ask a question

Organize an All Candidates Meeting

General Tips

- ✓ Partner with other organizations to lighten the load of event organizing and get the message out to more people.
- ✓ Set up a small organizing committee and book your date early so you can invite candidates and the community.
- ✓ Contact the main candidates with possible dates to get a sense of their availability.
- ✓ Invite local media to the meeting.
- ✓ Choose a venue that is accessible, with parking or on a public transit route and accessible to people with mobility issues. Ideal venue would seat 50 people or more.
- ✓ Consider and plan for translation, child care.
- ✓ If the venue is large consider using sound equipment.
- ✓ Use all your networks, print and social media to publicize the meeting. Print up an event flyer.
- ✓ Take photos to record your event and use later.

Contacting Candidates

- ✓ Invite the candidates from the major parties as early as possible with a firm date and location. Check the main party websites to find your local candidates
- ✓ Call and email the candidates. Keep following up if you haven't heard from them.
- ✓ Request each candidate confirm participation by email, in case you need proof of their confirmation.
- ✓ After the event send a note to thanks each candidate for their participation.

Goals of the Meeting

- ✓ Remember the meeting is an educational opportunity for candidates to understand what a CHC, AHAC, NPLC or CFHT is, and the need for our services in your community.
- ✓ It's an opportunity to ask the candidates questions on key issues and seek their commitment in a public forum
- ✓ It's an opportunity to build relationships with other local organizations/stakeholders. E.g. invite community and business leaders.
- ✓ It's an opportunity to get media coverage for your Centre.

Meeting Format

The organizing committee should decide on one of the following types of formats for your meeting:

- Debate: Candidates will be asked questions by the moderator, and they will be able to debate each other on their responses.
- Networking: Candidates have a few minutes at the outset of the event to introduce themselves and their campaign platforms, and then spend the remainder of the time chatting with participants individually in a large space. Candidates at the end of the event have a couple of minutes to give closing remarks based on what they heard from participants in the room.
- Open microphone: Microphones are set up in the audience, and people can queue up to ask the candidates questions.
- Question and Answer: Questions are submitted by the audience (usually in written format), and each candidate is asked to respond to the question.

Meeting Logistics

- A high profile moderator can be a draw. Ensure you have enough time to brief the moderator on the meeting format and any other issues.
- Microphones: depending on format, you may need 2-3 people with wireless microphones to approach the people who want to ask questions. Ensure the microphone runners do not hand over the microphone to the person speaking.
- Money: holding an all candidates meeting may not be in your budget so you may need to ask for a donation at the door. Determine what would be appropriate and indicate it on your outreach materials.
- At the event have someone at the door to greet people and direct them to the event. Have a sign in sheet to collect participants' contact information.