

Protecting Access to Family Doctors in Ontario



Ontario faces a snap provincial election amid widespread news coverage of our ongoing crisis in family medicine. Whether you're a family doctor concerned about your practice, or a patient worried about keeping your family doctor, or just looking to get connected with one, the upcoming election is your chance to speak up.

When MPP candidates knock on your door asking for your vote, you have a unique opportunity to discuss one of Ontario's most pressing healthcare issues—making sure everyone has access to a family doctor.

Over 2.5 million Ontarians currently can't find a family doctor. Without changes, this number could grow to 4.1 million by 2026. This affects all of us: our families, friends, and communities.

This guide helps both family doctors and patients have informed conversations with candidates about what's needed to ensure everyone can get the care they need. Keep it near your door so you're ready when candidates arrive.

Other ways you can help

- Attend local candidate meetings and ask questions about their plans for family medicine
- Share your story about the importance of having a family doctor on social media
- Write letters to your local newspaper about the need to support family doctors
- Talk to friends and neighbours about speaking up for family medicine
- Call in to radio shows to discuss the importance of having a family doctor

Questions to Ask Candidates

Q1

What specific plans do you have to make sure everyone in our community can find and keep a family doctor?

- Currently 2.5M Ontarians are “orphaned” without a family doc
- Many family doctors are nearing retirement
- Family doctors are working longer hours than ever (nearly 50 hours per week) but can’t meet the growing demand
- Ontario’s population grew by 550,000 in the past year alone

Q2

Many people are worried about losing their family doctor to retirement or burnout. How will you help keep our current family doctors practicing and feeling supported?

- Family doctors spend 19 hours per week on paperwork instead of patient care
- One in four family doctors works more than 60 hours weekly
- The workload has become unsustainable for many doctors

Q3

Family doctors are working nearly 50 hours per week, with almost half that time spent on paperwork instead of patient care. What’s your plan to fix this?

- Most family doctors want to spend more time addressing all their patients’ health concerns
- Quick visits don’t allow doctors to address complex health issues properly
- Other provinces have found solutions that give doctors more time with patients
- When doctors can spend proper time with patients, it reduces emergency room visits

Q4

How will you make sure everyone can get care from a family doctor, no matter where they live in Ontario?

- Many small towns and northern communities have trouble finding and keeping family doctors
- Some areas lack basic resources like reliable internet to run a medical office
- Not all parts of Ontario have the same access to healthcare
- Growing communities need more family doctors
- Rural and remote areas often struggle the most to get healthcare

Q5

What is your plan to support new doctors choosing family medicine as a career in Ontario?

- Fewer medical students are choosing to become family doctors
- Other provinces are successfully attracting new family doctors
- We need the next generation of family doctors to care for our growing population
- New family doctors often avoid opening practices due to high startup costs

Q6

Will you make access to family doctors a top healthcare priority if elected?

- Having a family doctor keeps Ontarians out of emergency rooms
- Family doctors provide preventative and cost-effective care
- Every community needs enough family doctors

Remember: Healthcare consistently ranks as a top election issue. Your voice matters in shaping the future of family medicine in Ontario.