



# OUTREACH

May 2018

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Enhancing Economic Opportunities for People 55-70 in GTA

OSSCO launches a new training program funded by OTF with partners – COSTI (Brampton), YMCA (Whitby), Dixon Hall and JobStart. Visit our events section mid-May for program dates and details.

## Message from Executive Director

*Elizabeth Nykorowytch  
Macnab, CHRL*

There are approximately 37 days left before the provincial election on June 7. The reason we remind our readers that it is a “provincial” election is regardless of age, people get confused as to what level of government is responsible for what services.

The current provincial government funded our Engaging Seniors in Civic Dialogue workshop to help clarify the jurisdictions and responsibilities for all 3 levels of government. It also allowed OSSCO attendees to learn how to speak to stakeholders and raise their concerns and issues in a way that would be heard. Our program teaches attendees how to build bridges in community so a cohesive seniors' voice is heard.

If you are deciding who to vote for, inside you will read about the positions from some seniors' groups, watch

organizations, seniors' networks and labour as to what is important in this election. As our Civic Dialogue attendees learned, knowing how to ask questions of the political parties and representatives is key in making the right decision for you at the ballot box. For your convenience we include contact information - phone, mailing addresses and websites - for all major parties. We are also sharing with you several ways to make your voice heard before election day.

What is important to aging Ontarians so far? For 4 years, OSSCO has asked for fairness and equity. We invested in educating government on issues they might not be aware of such as vulnerable retiree populations. According to the Wellesley Institute, to thrive as a retired single person in Toronto, you need an income in excess of \$32,000 a year. Communities including older immigrants and newcomers, people on ODSP, Ontario Works and low-income earners will not thrive. Should they continue working, they will be taxed at a rate of up to 92% as they

## Ontario Society of Senior Citizens Organizations

*La Société des Organisations des Citoyens Aînés de l'Ontario*

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struggle to reach that “thriving” level.

Releasing patients with compromised immune systems too soon results in additional costs to the health system. Older people “boomerang” more frequently from hospital to home and back again. Long wait lists for surgeries such as hip, knee, or vascular mean people arrive for surgeries sicker and weaker and take longer to recover.

Lack of publicly funded physiotherapies means slower recovery. We shared stories of the impact of crowded hospitals where people had heart attacks while waiting to be triaged or sitting nine hours with 3rd degree burns for processing. We shared the stories of seniors affected by the cap and trade tax as well as the high cost of hydro and many other things.

We pointed out gaps in services and programs and identified opportunities to fill those gaps. With tax credits, more older people could afford to go to the gym or join a seniors centre, reducing the risk of social isolation. Better job protection needs to be given to caregivers who enter and exit the workplace as well as establishing a stable, dependable workplace for workers providing care in the community. Portability and consistent home care services

to all Ontarians reduces stress on the caregiver, patient and those around. We conveyed that seniors wanted accountability from their government.

I encourage you to ask your questions during this election period. We will work with whoever gets elected and help the new government better understand about the needs of an aging Ontario.

## Advancing Senior Care in Ontario

By Shilpi Majumder, Director of Public Policy, AdvantAge Ontario



Moderator, candidates, health and community care sector representatives at the Election Forum.

On April 23, AdvantAge Ontario co-hosted an election forum, Advancing Senior Care in Ontario, along with 7 other organizations representing seniors’ care and services:

- Family Councils Ontario, Home Care Ontario
- Ontario Association of Residents’ Councils
- Ontario Caregiver Coalition
- Ontario Community Support Association
- Ontario Long-Term Care Association
- Ontario Retirement Communities Association

We came together with these organizations to collectively bring focus to seniors’ issues across the spectrum, from independently living seniors to those requiring long term and intensive care.

The forum began with a story from a senior and caregiver, Denyse Lynch who spoke of her journey through the system in caring for her father and the often uncoordinated services that she had to navigate through.

André Picard of the Globe and Mail moderated the session with candidates from the four parties:

- Hon. Dipika Damerla, Liberal MPP and Minister of Seniors Affairs
- Bill Walker, PC MPP and Critic for Seniors and Long-Term Care

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- Teresa Armstrong, NDP MPP and Critic for Seniors' Affairs and Home and Long-Term Care

- Valerie Powell, Green Party candidate and Critic for Seniors' Affairs

Each candidate provided an overview respond to audience questions submitted in advance which reflected six themes related to seniors' issues: affordable housing, home care, health human resources, caregiver support, long term care, and dementia care.

Minister Damerla focused on the investments made in home care, staffing, the dementia strategy, and long term care as well as funds provided to seniors for active living.

Mr. Walker focused on the need to streamline the health system and have a coordinated system, working with partners in the private sector as well as other levels of government.

Ms. Armstrong focused on the higher quality of care being provided by the not-for-profit sector, her party's commitment to providing the right level of care, staffing, and training. She also spoke of the findings of the Wetlaufer Inquiry which would inform further changes to the system.

Ms. Powell spoke of choice of seniors being key and moving money around across sectors, according to need.

We were pleased to see a great turnout from members of all our associations and stakeholders. We hope this forum served to demonstrate the importance of seniors' care and services.

As our senior population continues to grow in Ontario, so will their needs. It's vital that all of us continue to advocate on their behalf. We hope this forum will encourage attendees to take up the call to action to connect with local candidates to share their perspective on how we can better meet seniors' needs.

## 2018 Election Forum: Advancing Senior Care in Ontario

By Heather Beaumont



After each candidate made brief introductory statements, Globe and Mail health reporter and AdvantAge forum moderator, Andre Picard, asked the four electoral candidates to respond to previously submitted topics for discussion.

Each candidate spoke on subjects ranging from affordable housing; to home care; long-term care and dementia. The audience of about 200, included stakeholders with interests in the health care and community support sector.

P.C. MPP and critic for seniors', Bill Walker of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, said, "People that don't care about politics care about health care." Walker has explained that 34,000 seniors are wait-listed for long-term care. That number is expected to grow to 50,000 seniors by 2021.

The CEO of one forum sector partner, Deborah Simon of Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA) stated: "They all recognize that home care is important and all four [parties] are supporting more beds for long-term care. But they're also recognizing Ontarians don't want to spend their end days in facilities."

She added, "Six per cent of the health budget is spent on home and community care.

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We have to shore up hospital and home care. But we also don't want to compromise other things."

London-Fanshawe NDP MPP, Teresa Armstrong and critic for Seniors' Affairs, broached the issue of older persons and intimacy. She explained that the chances of getting sexual needs met in retirement or long-term care were "not good".

Picard also asked the candidates to comment on ways to make Ontario more senior friendly.

"We cannot look at seniors solely through the lens of healthcare," said the Hon. Dipika Damerla, Liberal MPP and Minister of Seniors Affairs. "A lot of seniors...still have aspirations and goals." Minister Damerla revealed that 85% of seniors have stated that they want to continue learning.

Valerie Powell, Orillia and Simcoe North, Green Party candidate and Seniors' Affairs critic suggested that, with a system that focuses on individual needs and allows for flexibility in living conditions, "we look to Denmark" to create more age-friendly cities for older persons.

## Decisions, Decisions, Decisions

By Elizabeth Nykorowysch  
Macnab, CHRL

If you recently attended OSSCO's Engaging Seniors in Civic Dialogue workshop, then you learned how important it is to find out the positions of all political parties - before casting your vote June 7th.

I have shared my first election experience and the research I conducted before choosing my candidate and party of choice. I still follow that same practice --researching to determine party platforms; attending all candidate meetings to ask questions; discussing my thoughts after the debates and emailing (or writing) candidates to get answers.

I surprise people because I don't vote for the same party in every election. To help you in this election, you'll find contact information for the three major parties.

Visit the News and Issues section of our website to learn more of what's important to older people in this election.



Listed in alphabetical order, they are:

### Ontario Liberal Party:

Liberal Party Leader: Kathleen Wynne

Website:  
<https://www.ontarioliberal.ca/>

Phone: 1-800-268-7250 or Toll Free: (800) 361-3881

Address: 10 St Mary St, Toronto, ON M4Y 1P9

Email: [ontario@liberal.ca](mailto:ontario@liberal.ca)

### Ontario NDP:

Ontario NDP Leader: Andrea Horwath

Website:  
<https://www.ontariondp.ca/>

Phone: 416-591-8637 or Toll Free: 1-866-390-6637

Address: 2069 Lakeshore Blvd West, Suite 201

Toronto, Ontario. M8V 3Z4

Email: [info@ontariondp.ca](mailto:info@ontariondp.ca)

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## Ontario PC Party:

Ontario PC Leader: Doug Ford

Website:

<https://www.ontariopc.ca/>

Phone: 416-861-0020

Address: 59 Adelaide St E #400,  
Toronto, ON M5C 1K6

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/ontariopc/>

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/OntarioPCParty>

You can also go on-line and research candidates with other parties like the Green Party and the Libertarians.

## You Can Make A Difference

OSSCO's Workshop, Engaging Seniors attendees are reminded of the many ways to get involved and communicate your thoughts such as writing a letter, creating a paper or e-petition and collecting signatures or writing an editorial comment or blog or sharing your thoughts with others by email.

Social media is a very powerful communication tool. LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram are the more commonly used sites and you can always tweet on *Twitter*, i.e. #sharemyopinion.

The Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) shows us how to get involved and create change. OHC recognizes Jinyu Jing, Charlotte Pape, Maleeha Shams, and Chuqiao Yan as a great example of individuals making a difference and creating engagement within the community. The University of Toronto Health Policy students set a goal to bring about change and issued a joint statement calling for improvements in accessing care in long-term care homes.

The students began by identifying the issues that are important to them; providing solutions and asking for support with an e-letter or letter-writing campaign. Consider creating a campaign using the students' template in your own neighbourhood or region. If something is important to you this election and you would like to see a change, put it in writing and forward it.

The students have made it easy for others to create engagement within their own communities with a letter template. In the body of your email, outline why you think this change needs to happen. Be clear and realistic about the change. For example, if economic conditions are important in your region, outline what you would like to see happen and what the role of government should be. If

high taxes are an issue, consider how the budget could be balanced and the impact on social services.

Getting involved is an opportunity to exercise a kind of stewardship requiring a level of sweet boldness, diplomacy and persistence. If we want our politicians to get stuff done, then we'd better show them what we would like done.

[Click here](#) for the OHC Long-Term Care Joint statement.

[Click here](#) for the OHC engagement letter template.

## Care Watch Ontario believes Politicians Need To Earn Your Support



This election is a key opportunity to influence policies that affect senior citizens right across the province. There are many issues that need to be raised and considered to make informed decisions. Care Watch Ontario's focus in this election is accessible home

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care and community support services.

Michèle Harding, Chair of Care Watch Ontario, a volunteer-run, senior-led, non-profit that advocates quality home and community care and monitors and analyzes provincial policy, believes the seniors' vote can make an impact in the upcoming election. Why? Because seniors vote at a higher rate than any other age group.

Senior citizens have repeatedly told Care Watch, governments and researchers that they want to live independently, and in their homes as long as possible. However, to do so, we have to put in place the right policies and resources.

Seniors can make a big difference in the upcoming Ontario election to help make dignified ageing at home a reality. Care Watch encourages everyone to actively participate in the election process and make their vote count!

Seniors need community support services to live independently. This includes personal care, homemaking, transportation, meals and adult services. These services need funding and at Care Watch Ontario, they believe funding hasn't kept pace with the increased demand. Care

Watch Ontario also believes these services would significantly contribute to reducing hospital overcrowding, wait times and costs.

"Make it personal when deciding how to cast your ballot," Harding advises senior voters. "Ask yourself, what did the candidate actually commit to do? How long did it take for the candidate to return your call? How long did it take to get a PSW? What gives you comfort?" She continues, "You need to make it personal based on how you're going to survive."

For more information on the issues in the provincial election, [click here](#).

## Concerned Friends' Explains the Two-Tier System in Long-term Care

For over 30 years, Concerned Friends of Ontario, a registered, non-profit charity, has been dedicated to reforming the long-term care system and improving quality of life for residents. In an open letter, they write about why the system must go.

Dear Friends in Ontario:

Long-term care is either accommodation for the "Haves," or accommodation for the "Have Nots!"

For the "Haves," the Ontario Long-Term Care Homes Act



allows 60 per cent of Ontario's long-term care beds to be designated as "preferred accommodation," which is a semi-private or private room.

Ontarians who can only afford basic/standard accommodation should not have to wait longer for a long-term care bed, nor should they be forced to pay an additional \$800 or more per month for preferred accommodation that they cannot afford. For example, at the end of February 2018, 77% of individuals in Ontario's Central East region were waiting for lower cost, basic accommodation. This is also happening in other parts of the province.

Concerned Friends is calling on the Ministry of Health and

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Long-term Care to immediately stop this inequity that goes against our national policy of universal health care for all, regardless of income or financial means.

Concerned Friends of Ontario Citizens in Care Facilities can be reached as follows:

Info@concernedfriends.ca

416.489.0146 (Answering Service) or 1.855.489.0146 (Toll Free)

## Ontario Health Coalition Fully Supports Public Dental Care



Natalie Mehra, Executive Director, Ontario Health Coalition addresses OSSCO workshop participants

*“A public dental plan, like public health care, is fundamentally about equity. It’s about providing all people with the opportunity to live healthy, dignified lives, and fulfill their human*

*potential.”* -- Natalie Mehra, Executive Director OHC

“Public dental care to cover everyone is welcome news from NDP Leader Andrea Horwath,” says Natalie Mehra, Executive Director of the Ontario Health Coalition. “We stand in full support of public dental care. Expanding the principles of Medicare to include dental care makes sense, it’s long overdue.

“We must challenge head-on this notion that our society, one of the richest in the world, cannot afford to take care of each other like this. People are paying already for dental care -- and they’re paying more than they would through a publicly-administered non-profit plan - - and getting less.

“What is unaffordable for far too many of us is paying out-of-pocket when you are elderly without much income, or sick, or in an emergency. Ontario has the lowest funding for all our public services of any province in Canada. There is considerable room to improve funding, even just to come up to the average of the rest of the country. This means the wealthy must pay their fair share, as they did in generations past.

“We are pleased that Ontario’s politicians are raising expectations of what government can do to improve

lives and create a compassionate society. We are asking our supporters to speak out in support of this initiative, and of all the initiatives to bring a comprehensive and universal public drug coverage program for all Canadians, to push to rebuild our hospital capacity, to restore beds and services to meet people’s needs, and to build up long-term care for Ontarians.

## Anna Zachariah Honoured With a Volunteer Toronto Legacy Award



Paula Ellis, Legacy Award recipient and OSSCO Board Member, Anna Zachariah and Executive Director, Elizabeth Macnab

Twenty-five volunteers were recently recognized for their contributions with this award. And Zachariah is one of them.

Every day, people like OSSCO’s Zachariah donate

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their time and their skills to non-profit organizations not realizing that they are making a difference and advancing humanity.

Throughout her life, Zachariah has used her legal know-how to offer knowledge and support to vulnerable groups.

Michael Blake, from Habitat for Humanity, was also recognized with this award by donating 11,000+ hours to more than 180 build sites.

Here, at OSSCO we celebrated volunteers at our April *Tuesdays with OSSCO* workshop with presentations from Habitat for Humanity and Volunteer Toronto. Participants heard from Colin Rainsbury, who spoke on behalf of Volunteer Toronto. Rainsbury has been volunteering since he was six years old.



Terry Hart addresses workshop participants while Heather Saba, Habitat for Humanity GTA and Colin Rainsbury and Venus Pak, from Volunteer Toronto, listen in.

Terry Hart volunteers in the Habitat for Humanity ReStore, which stocks and sells donated items from GTA residents.

Both speakers shared their stories and experiences as volunteers talking about their different roles; the friends they've made; the skills they learned and the joy of contributing to others.

To find the right volunteer role for you, contact Venus Pak at Volunteer Toronto at 416-961-6888 x 224 or visit: [www.volunteertoronto.ca](http://www.volunteertoronto.ca).

Habitat for Humanity volunteers have many ways to contribute. To learn about volunteering at Habitat for Humanity, contact Heather Saba at 416-755-7353 x 261 or visit: <https://habitatgta.ca/>.

## Introducing Our Newest Board Member: Megan McElwain



OSSCO Board Director Megan McElwain, is a B.A. graduate of Ryerson University's Communications program. She's worked in production in morning television in New York City and interviewed Oscar-nominated actors who walked the red carpet at the Academy Awards in Los Angeles.

In 2010, McElwain opened her own full-service advertising and marketing agency, McElwain & Company. She now works in the role of Associate Director, Development, Central Canada with the Fraser Institute.

Her years in the broadcast industry helped her to understand the value of building and maintaining relationships as a way to nurture client loyalty. This perspective, along with her trusted knowledge of media communications and national politics are an asset to OSSCO.

Through her business experience, McElwain has been approached by a number of non-profits, throughout her career, to contribute to good causes. When asked to do something to help out, she does it. "It's a way to give back," she explains. "I think all businesses should do it." She's contributed creative ideas along with her television production talents to videos on a volunteer basis.

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She has a specific interest in helping the vulnerable and homeless and has given her time to an organization that fills knapsacks with water bottles, granola bars and socks for the homeless -- Project Water/Project Winter Survival. Other volunteer roles include serving as a Vice Chair on the Albany Club's Events Committee and developing brand/marketing initiatives.

## Support Continues For Seniors-Related E-Petition to Parliament

Thanks to many of you for spreading the word about OSSCO Board Member, Ghazy Mujahid's electronic Parliamentary petition.

More signatures are needed for our voice to be heard and for Parliament to recognize the importance of a dedicated Minister of Seniors Affairs.

Please share the information on this e-petition and help us reach the goal of 50,000 signatures from older people across Canada by July 1st.

The Petition draws attention to the increasing proportion of

seniors in Canada's population and calls for the appointment of a Minister or Special Advisor to the Prime Minister at the federal level to ensure a coordinated approach towards safeguarding the interests of seniors and improving their quality of life.

Your support is needed to get enough signatures so that the Petition is recognized once tabled as important for discussion in the House of Commons.

Every Canadian citizen (residing anywhere in the world) and permanent resident (residing in Canada) is eligible to sign irrespective of age.

Please sign this e-petition and ask people you know to sign it as well.

To open the e-Petition please click the link [here](#).

1. Click on Sign the Petition
2. After filling all the required information, click Sign.
3. You will then receive an email to confirm your signature and complete the signing process.

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## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT OSSCO

Programs *free* for adults 55+

Tuesdays with OSSCO  
presents

Author Kathleen Jones

Date: May 29, 2018 3-4:30pm

Location: 333 Wilson Ave. #406

Meet author Kathleen as she discusses her new novel: Love Is the Punch Line and why it was 50 years in the making. Book signing follows.

Call (416) 785-8570 to register or visit

<http://www.ocsco.ca/events>

Be the Best You!  
OSSCO Celebrates Seniors'  
Month

Date: June 26, 2018 2- 4pm

Location: Asbury and West  
United Church  
3180 Bathurst Street

Come and learn how good Body Health keeps you young. The young at heart will enjoy the fashion show with our older models. Discover the surprising reasons why a healthy smile matters for a healthy body.

Gentlemen & Ladies are welcome.

Register by calling  
(416) 785-8570 or visit

<http://www.ocsco.ca> or email



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