
Report of the Commissioner of Community and Health Services
2024 to 2027 Plan to Support Seniors – Implementation Update

1. Recommendations

1. Council endorse the 2024 to 2027 Plan to Support Seniors (Plan) Advocacy Priorities “Strengthening Seniors’ Health and Well-Being in York Region” (Attachment 1), which includes five advocacy priority areas:
 - a. Sustain and expand funding for Community Paramedicine
 - b. Establish a provincial coordinating body for seniors’ programs and services
 - c. Expand seniors’ access to digital technology and improve digital literacy
 - d. Fund annual in-home or virtual health professional visits for seniors 75+
 - e. Improve long-term policy planning and funding for seniors’ health, housing and social care
2. Regional Chair write to the Federal Secretary of State (Seniors), Federal Minister of Health, Federal Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Federal Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation, Federal Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Provincial Minister of Seniors and Accessibility, Provincial Minister of Health, Provincial Minister of Long-Term Care, Provincial Minister of Finance, Provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Provincial Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, and Provincial Minister of Infrastructure requesting support and further investments to advance priorities listed in Attachment 1.
3. Regional Clerk circulate this report for information to the Provincial Minister of Long-Term Care, Provincial Minister of Seniors and Accessibility, Provincial Minister of Health, York Region Members of Provincial Parliament and Members of Parliament, local municipalities, York Region Human Services Planning Board, Ontario Health atHome – Central, Ontario Health Teams in York Region, local hospital CEOs, Ontario Health Central Region, AdvantAge Ontario, Ontario Long-Term Care Association, Ontario

2. Purpose

This report seeks endorsement of Advocacy Priorities included in the Plan to Support Seniors (the “Plan”) (Attachment 1). This report also provides an implementation progress update on the [2024 to 2027 Plan to Support Seniors](#), highlighting accomplishments (Attachment 2).

This report follows through on a commitment to Council to report on Plan implementation through bi-annual progress reports (2026 and 2028).

Key Points:

- The Region's senior population continues to grow. Between 2016 and 2021, the number of residents aged 65 and older increased by 23%, and by 2051, this population is projected to more than double
- The Plan provides a strong framework to support the Region’s growing and diverse seniors population to age in place. It identifies actions where the Region has responsibility to act, while also outlining advocacy priorities where provincial or federal action is required. Aging in place allows older adults to maintain independence in familiar surroundings while staying connected to their communities
- The Region-led plan draws on collaboration with community partners, local municipalities, Ontario Health Teams, and seniors’ groups to inform and support implementation
- Actions taken under the Plan continue to benefit the Region’s seniors, with all 27 actions on track in 2025 (5 completed and 22 ongoing)
- York Region was formally recognized by the Province of Ontario as an Age-Friendly Community in January 2026 through this Plan
- Growth and complexity of need in the senior population is impacting service demand across the aging continuum, including access to affordable housing options, home and community care and long-term care homes. Closing health, housing and social care gaps across the continuum is central to Plan advocacy to both provincial and federal governments
- Implementation of Plan actions continues through 2026 and 2027 to advance service planning and partnerships supporting seniors through coordinated interdepartmental leadership and collaboration across the organization, and with community partners, local municipalities, seniors, and caregivers. The next implementation update will be in Spring 2028

3. Background

The Plan's actions enhance health and well-being of growing and diverse seniors population

By 2051, close to one in four York Region residents will be aged 65 and above. While many seniors remain healthy, active and connected to their communities, over time some will require additional supports and age-friendly services across health and social care continuum.

Council approved the Plan on [March 7, 2024](#), building on foundation of success from [2016 Seniors Strategy](#) and guiding principles. The Plan identifies four priority areas – (1) keeping seniors healthier, longer, (2) supporting seniors to live in age-friendly communities, (3) connecting seniors and caregivers to right programs and services at right times, and (4) improving coordination, organization and planning of services for seniors – each with objectives, actions, deliverables and targets to enhance health and well-being of growing and diverse seniors population. It focuses on supporting seniors to age in the right place based on their preferences, circumstances and care needs. The Plan identifies actions where the Region has responsibility and an advocacy agenda where other jurisdictions have responsibility to act.

4. Analysis

Seniors are a diverse group with varied needs and an age span of 65 to 100+ years

Seniors' needs vary across the health, housing and social care continuum depending on factors such as age, income, immigration status, language, ability/disability, health and geography.

Most seniors prefer to age at home in the community, in dwellings that fit closest to their needs, preferences and circumstances. In York Region, 97% of seniors live in the community, with 14% of those 65 years and older living alone. For those 85 and older, the percentage rises to 26%.

Many seniors remain healthy, active and connected to their communities; however, others require more comprehensive health and lifestyle supports. Seniors account for a large share of 9-1-1 calls to Paramedics: 44% of calls in 2024 responded to individuals 65 and over and 46% of calls in 2025.

As of 2023, about one in five seniors were living with low-income, a 5% decrease compared to 2022. This decline in low-income rates for seniors may be attributed to the recent increase in Old Age Security benefits and adjustments for inflation on other federal benefits for seniors. While many seniors in York Region receive federal benefits that provide important assistance, these payments alone do not ensure that a senior's income exceeds the low-income threshold. This is because the low-income threshold is based on the earnings of most Canadians, rather than on what is needed for basic survival.

Affordable housing remains an important concern for seniors. About one in five senior-led households (21%) spent at least 50% of their income on housing in 2021, highlighting affordability

pressures. In 2025, 33% of people on the Region’s subsidized housing waitlist were aged 60 years and older.

The Plan noted that actions might change over time. The aging population and their changing socioeconomic requirements are shaping evolving service demands, program planning, partnerships and advocacy actions (see Table 1 for Plan accomplishments).

York Region’s seniors are benefitting from actions taken under the Plan

York Region made steady progress over the first two years of implementing the Plan. While this is a Region-led plan, the Region also collaborates with numerous community partners, local municipalities, Ontario Health Teams and seniors groups to inform and implement the Plan to best support diverse needs of seniors and caregivers.

In January 2026, the Region – through the Plan – was formally recognized by the Government of Ontario as an [Age-Friendly Community](#), marking an important milestone in York Region’s ongoing commitment to supporting older adults. The designation followed a comprehensive assessment by the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility. Provincial recognition highlights York Region’s commitment to fostering inclusive, accessible and age-friendly communities where older adults can thrive in strong, caring, safe communities.

Targeted actions and deliverables are driving achievement of the Plan’s four priorities: 1. Keeping Seniors Healthier Longer; 2. Supporting Seniors to Live in Age-Friendly Complete Communities; 3. Connecting Seniors and Caregivers to Right Programs and Services at Right Times; and 4. Improving Coordination, Organization and Planning of Services for Seniors.

Table 1 highlights results achieved under each Plan priority in 2024 and 2025, demonstrating measurable progress and impact for seniors and caregivers across York Region.

Table 1
2024 and 2025 Plan Accomplishment Highlights

Plan Priority and Objective	Accomplishments
<p>Priority One: Keeping Seniors Healthier Longer Objective: Provide seniors, caregivers and staff supporting seniors information to help them improve physical activity and social</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falls remain the leading cause of injury-related emergency intervention among seniors. To address this, Public Health delivered 59 fall prevention program engagements in 2024 and 2025, including presentation to 185 older adults at the 2024 Aurora Fall Prevention Summit, where 95% of evaluation respondents reported plans to use at least one fall prevention strategy. In 2024 a virtual “Retiring on Low-Income” education series was delivered to seniors, caregivers, community partners and staff to improve understanding of the income tax and benefits system and increase uptake of eligible supports. The series attracted 311

Plan Priority and Objective	Accomplishments
connectedness, and slow decline of or prevent chronic disease	<p>participants, with recorded sessions continuing to be accessed, receiving more than 1,100 views.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoted and amplified the Plan through participation at 30 seniors events (fairs), and delivering 39 in-person and virtual presentations in 2024 and 2025, helping seniors and caregivers access supports earlier, reduce social isolation and improve health and well-being.
<p>Priority Two: Supporting Seniors to Live in Age-Friendly Complete Communities Objective: Better integrate services for seniors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported the development of age- friendly community initiatives in collaboration with the York Region Healthy Aging Working Group, Age- Friendly Vaughan Advisory Committee, City of Richmond Hill's Age- Friendly Community Council, Township of King Age- Friendly Community Steering Committee, and Town of East Gwillimbury. This work included reviewing age- friendly policies, programs, guides, checklists and recognition models, and sharing best practices from other jurisdictions to support seniors' health and well- being. To support end of life care provision at home, all York Region Paramedics are trained in palliative care. In 2024 and 2025 combined, staff supported 62 palliative seniors aligning paramedic capabilities with resident goals of care and allowing eligible residents the option of being treated at home while also being referred to other health care providers, reducing unnecessary hospital visits. Many seniors have difficulty accessing primary health care, and when needed, long-term care, with some relying on 911 services and emergency department visits for their unmet needs. Novel Community Paramedicine programs have been developed and delivered, to help address care gaps and improve response options and efficiencies, including 8,758 supportive interactions/visits for seniors in 2024 and 2025 combined. In 2025, a Community Paramedicine Social Prescribing pilot received \$30,000 in grant funding over 18 months from Healthcare Excellence Canada to connect medical care with social and community- based supports. York Region continues to advance development of the Unionville Commons Seniors Hub in Markham, to deliver accessible seniors- focused services that support those living in Unionville Commons building and surrounding communities to age in place and respond directly to local community needs. Hub partners were identified in Q4 2025, and construction continues with completion targeted for Q4 2026.
<p>Priority Three: Connecting Seniors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help seniors find information about services they may need and proactively address information needs across an aging continuum, in

Plan Priority and Objective	Accomplishments
<p>and Caregivers to Right Programs and Services at Right Times</p> <p>Objective: Improve system navigation for seniors</p>	<p>2024-2025 a printable Navigation Guide for York Region Seniors and Caregivers was developed through extensive consultations with seniors and caregivers, seniors groups, York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee, internal staff, community partners and local municipalities. The Navigation Guide became available online at york.ca/Seniors in digital and printable formats in 2026, and will be promoted along with other helpful resources this year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A redesign of the corporate contact centre (formally Access York) call tree in 2025 includes an option for seniors related services, resulting in improved navigation experience for seniors, inclusive of French and multi-language supports • Supported seniors (60+) on the Region’s subsidized housing waitlist to access financial benefits and resources while they wait for subsidized housing options. This program was then expanded to onsite delivery in Housing York Inc. communities reaching 188 residents. Among surveyed participants, 96% (71/74) reported they would apply what they learned. • Updated the Regional Low-Income Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Tax Relief program for low-income seniors and persons with disabilities that allows eligible homeowners to defer partial or full property tax increases interest free. Council approved changes in 2025, ensuring better targeting of financial need and introducing automated inflation adjustments to income thresholds. Those interested in applying connect directly with their local municipality's tax office to confirm eligibility and submit an application.
<p>Priority Area Four: Improving Coordination, Organization and Planning of Services for Seniors</p> <p>Objective: Collaborate on and support strategic improvements for overall system supporting seniors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through York Region’s Internal Integrated Response for Vulnerable Seniors Network (VSN) program, provided wrap-around supports to stabilize seniors in crisis. VSN stabilized 85% of 27 reported seniors in crisis in 2024 and 82% of 22 in 2025 with remaining clients redirected to other service pathways. • Created tools and products to support staff and sector partners serving seniors with program planning and grant proposal writing, including developing and distributing a data rich York Region Seniors Target Group Toolkit to 51 community organizations in 2024 to support service planning and outreach to York Region seniors

Attachment 2 summarizes results from the first two years of implementation. Performance measures and targets show progress on each priority and related objectives. Actions and deliverables with multiple year timelines, extending beyond 2025, are noted as ongoing, unless they are complete.

In summary, all 27 Plan actions are on track in 2025 (5 are complete and 22 are ongoing). Implementation continues through 2026 and 2027, with emphasis on coordinated strategic interdepartmental leadership through a corporate Seniors Core Team table. In addition, collaboration continues with community partners and local municipalities to address the health and well-being of York Region seniors, caregivers and those supporting them along the aging continuum. A final progress update will be brought forward in Spring 2028.

Advocacy to senior levels of government is critical to close system gaps for seniors

While many achievements have been realized through the Plan, significant gaps remain across seniors' health, housing, and social care continuum. Rapid population aging is putting pressure on emergency departments, hospitals, long-term care, housing supply, and the health workforce. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated approach to secure funding, influence policy, and shape public narratives and perceptions. Many of the most pressing gaps – such as access to affordable housing, accessible home and community care, long-term care options, and digital literacy – cannot be addressed through York Region alone and require sustained provincial and federal leadership and investment.

The advocacy positions in “Strengthening Seniors’ Health and Well-Being in York Region”, (Attachment 1) build on previous advocacy efforts from [2024](#) and include:

1. Sustain and expand funding for Community Paramedicine

The Province’s announcement of permanent funding for the Community Paramedicine Long Term Care program in 2025 is an important milestone. Funding for all Community Paramedicine programs should keep pace with population growth and evolving community needs. Continued investment is needed to ensure sustainable operations, resource stability and alignment with evolving provincial priorities such as right care, right place.

2. Establish a provincial coordinating body for seniors programs and services

A provincial coordinating body, acting as a seniors’ secretariat, would streamline planning, coordination and funding across health, housing and social care, and strengthen Ontario Health Teams’ integration efforts, improving navigation and equity.

3. Expand seniors’ access to digital technology and improve digital literacy

Targeted investments are needed in device affordability, broadband access, and senior friendly virtual training and pathways.

4. Fund annual in-home or virtual preventive health visits for seniors 75+

Proactive, low-cost prevention delivers high system value. Annual in home or virtual check-ins by health professionals can identify risks early – such as nutrition and falls prevention

strategies, medication issues, mental health concerns, unsafe housing conditions, or caregiver burnout – before crises occur.

5. Improve long-term policy planning and funding for seniors’ health, housing and social care

Integrated, multiyear planning and shared investment are needed to address interconnected health, housing, and social domains across senior levels of government.

Plan aligns with and supports 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan and Vision of strong, caring, safe communities

Plan priority areas align with [2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan](#) to help achieve Region’s Vision of strong, caring, safe communities and support community well-being priority and objectives that focus on livability, health, safety and social well-being of York Region communities.

5. Financial Considerations

This report does not present changes to the Region’s budget or fiscal position.

Costs associated with implementing the Plan are managed within the existing, Council- approved budgets of Departments leading Plan actions. The approved 2025 total operating budget for coordination and oversight of the Plan was \$614,985. The Region will continue to seek funding through advocacy to senior levels of government to support Plan priorities.

6. Local Impact

Community and municipal collaborations remain key to Plan implementation. This includes collaborative tables across Ontario Health Teams in York Region, as well as the York Region / United Way Seniors Cluster Table with participation from over 12 local community partners and each local municipality. Plan actions and deliverables are also actively shared with local seniors groups to support alignment and engagement.

7. Conclusion

Strong progress was made in the first two years (2024 and 2025) to advance Plan priorities and objectives. Actions are making a meaningful difference in the lives of seniors and caregivers across York Region by helping them stay safer, healthier, and more connected in their communities. Seniors have benefited from improved access to preventive supports, easier navigation of programs and services, and practical assistance that supports aging in the right place with dignity and independence. Collaborative initiatives, such as community paramedicine, fall prevention, financial empowerment, and crisis response, help address needs earlier and reduce reliance on emergency and institutional care. Continued implementation through 2026 and 2027 will build on this momentum, informed by lessons learned and ongoing engagement, to strengthen coordinated supports that respond to the evolving needs of seniors and their caregivers.

For more information on this report, please contact Julia Roitenberg, General Manager, Paramedic and Seniors Services, Community and Health Services at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 74024. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



Recommended by:

Lisa Gonsalves

Commissioner of Community and Health Services



Approved for Submission:

Erin Mahoney

Chief Administrative Officer

April 21, 2026

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Attachment 1 – Strengthening Seniors’ Health and Well-Being in York Region (17183806)

Attachment 2 – Plan Progress Summary for 2024 and 2025 (17162658)