

Toronto, Sept 13 (AP) - Toronto Mayor Rob Ford withdrew his re-election bid Friday as he seeks treatment for a tumor in his abdomen, dramatically ending a campaign he had doggedly pursued despite a stint in rehab and calls for him to quit amid drug and alcohol scandals. But he announced his brother would run in his place, saying "we cannot go backwards."

Analysts say the decision is unlikely to change the outcome of the mayoral election that Ford had been widely expected to lose after a string of revelations involving crack-smoking, public drunkenness and outrageous behavior.

But Toronto won't see the last of Ford anytime soon. He said he has opted to seek a City Council seat representing a district in his home suburb of Etobicoke, where his brash everyman style and conservative fiscal policies first gained a faithful following that became known as Ford Nation.

"My heart is heavy when I tell you that I'm unable to continue my campaign for re-election as your mayor," Ford said in a statement. "I have asked Doug to run to become the next Mayor of Toronto, because we need him. We cannot go backwards."

Doug Ford, a city councilor who has been the mayor's most fiery defender, submitted his papers to run for mayor Friday, the deadline to sign up. He will face two other major candidates in the Oct. 27 election.

"I stand here with mixed emotions and a very heavy heart. First and foremost I am concerned about my brother," said Doug Ford, who was surrounded by family members outside the Ford family home as he officially announced he is entering the race.

Rob Ford's decision came two days after he was hospitalized and the tumor was discovered. Biopsy results won't be back for a week and a definitive diagnosis is pending.

"As many of you know I've been dealing with a serious medical issue, the details of which are unknown. But I know that with the love and support of my family, I will get through this," Ford said.

The international spotlight first fell on Ford in May 2013, when Toronto Star and the U.S. website Gawker reported the existence of a video apparently showing the mayor inhaling from a crack pipe. He denied the existence of the video for months but finally admitted to using crack after police announced they had obtained it.

The ensuing uproar climaxed with the Toronto City Council stripping Ford of most of his mayoral powers. It lacked the authority to oust him from office because Ford was not convicted of a crime.

Revelations of Ford's inappropriate behavior have piled up over the months. Documents showed that former staffers of the mayor told police he was intoxicated at work and drank while driving. A video emerged of an intoxicated Ford threatening to kill someone in an obscenity-laced rant. And school documents recently revealed that the mayor once forced students to roll in goose droppings when he had a side job as a high school football team coach.

The mayor has been the subject of an ongoing police investigation but has not been charged. When reports emerged this year of a second video showing him apparently smoking crack, Ford entered rehab for two months and returned to work and campaigning in June.

Doug Ford, 49, has stood resolutely by his brother throughout the scandals, often angrily tearing into the mayor's detractors. He once called Toronto's police chief "biased" for saying he was disappointed in Rob Ford over the crack video.

The city councilor has himself has been the subject of drug allegations. The Globe and Mail newspaper reported last year that Doug Ford sold hashish for several years in the 1980s, allegations he has denied.

Nelson Wiseman, a University of Toronto political science professor, said Doug Ford's candidacy is unlikely to change the course of an election that his brother had been expected to lose.

"The Ford years in City Hall are coming to an end in a few short weeks," Wiseman said. "After this Toronto's mayor will never again make it in the international news again."

He said he expects John Tory, a moderate conservative, to continue being the front-runner, ahead of Doug Ford and leftist Olivia Chow.

"It's not just that Doug's too late. He doesn't have the celebrity status of Rob Ford. Nobody is running around wanting to take a selfie with Doug," Wiseman said.

Doug Ford's two main rivals had contrasting responses to his candidacy.

Chow quietly wished Rob Ford a speedy recovery and said she would wait for Doug Ford to comment before talking about him. Tory also wished Rob Ford well but then unleashed a blistering attack on Doug, calling him an "insult machine" who has repeatedly put down members of council and the provincial government.

Josh Matlow, a centrist on city council, called Friday's news shocking and Shakespearean.