

Share your plan for arthritis prevention, treatment and care in British Columbia

Arthritis is *one* word that describes *more than 100 disease types* and affects *one in five BC residents*. To effectively treat and manage the most disabling and life-threatening types – osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis – the next elected BC government must improve the level of arthritis prevention, treatment and care.

Question 1

Arthritis affects approximately 600,000 BC residents, yet no model of arthritis care is available. This is particularly pronounced outside of the Lower Mainland. Where you live can be more important in determining treatment than how sick or disabled you are.

What will your government do to bring a high quality, evidence-based model of arthritis care for all BC residents?

Question 2

A 2016 study by researchers from the University of Calgary and Statistics Canada predicts that by 2031, OA will cost the Canadian economy an estimated \$17.5 billion a year in lost productivity. Osteoarthritis forces people to stop working or work less due to pain, fatigue, and the demands of prescribed treatment therapies. The work time loss is significant because of the reducing number of workers available to replace retiring baby boomers after decades of low birth rates.

What will your government do to introduce patient education and exercise programs, such as GLA:D, that have been proven to significantly reduce hip or knee osteoarthritis symptoms?

Question 3

Aboriginal Canadians have some of the highest rates of serious or life-threatening arthritis in the world, and are at greater risk for becoming disabled by arthritis. Significant gaps in Aboriginal arthritis care currently exist in BC.

What will your government do to improve the healthcare and lives of Aboriginals living with arthritis in BC?

Question 4

Arthritis Consumer Experts annually ranks publicly funded drug formularies based on the number of medically necessary arthritis medications (e.g. biologics, biosimilars and targeted small molecule). B.C. currently sits in fourth place in Canada.

What will your government do to improve the province's ranking and ensure that BC residents living with arthritis, with the help of the doctors who treat them, are able to choose the medication most appropriate for their specific disease and risk factors?

Question 5

Arthritis is the leading cause of disability and work disability in BC. About a quarter of the population with arthritis between 20 and 54 years of age in BC were not in the labour force because of their arthritis.

How will your government establish better prevention programs and facilitate flexible work arrangements to help reduce the direct and indirect costs of arthritis to BC employers and the BC economy?

Question 6

The economic burden of arthritis is expected to double within a generation and strain the BC health system's ability to provide quality care to BC patients with arthritis.

Will your government take steps to increase the number of rheumatologists and arthritis trained allied health professionals to ensure timely, specialized care for BC patients with arthritis?