

Arthritis Consumer Experts Questionnaire

B.C. Green Party Response

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

The B.C. Green Party believes that the highest priority of government should be to promote the health and wellbeing of the people it serves. A B.C. Green Government will work in consultation with experts to implement high quality evidence-based arthritis care.

Despite the importance of primary care, many British Columbians do not have a family doctor. Many British Columbians can't afford costly prescription medications or services like physiotherapists. A B.C. Green government would remove barriers to care so that British Columbians can get the services they need.

One of the direst healthcare issues facing all British Columbians, particularly those living with a chronic condition such as arthritis, is the lack of access to quality primary care. Patients experiencing complex health issues deserve a comprehensive approach to care in a timely manner. A B.C. Green government will invest in expanding interprofessional, integrated primary care, provided by physiotherapists, nurse practitioners, midwives, dietitians and other health professionals. This will expand access to primary care for people across B.C. This initiative to enhance and support interprofessional health care will enable patients to benefit from the full scope of knowledge and expertise of qualified health practitioners, reduce the burden on medical practitioners, and reduce wait times for treatment.

A B.C. Green government will also work with health authorities to identify and remove barriers to the implementation of integrated healthcare delivery between acute and post-acute service providers, to ensure that people are well-supported through post-acute community care.

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?

A B.C. Green Government will take an evidence-based approach to healthcare, drawing on best practices in other jurisdictions in consultation with experts. GLA:D is one such program that a B.C. Green government would explore further and actively consider supporting.

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

The B.C. Green Party is committed to consulting with the First Nations Health Authorities towards achieving the vision of healthy, strong, vibrant Aboriginal communities and addressing their unique healthcare needs. Our investment in expanding access to primary integrated care will also benefit Aboriginal British Columbians suffering from arthritis, as it will expand access to quality primary care across B.C. The B.C. Green Party also supports further investigation and use of Telehealth services to help us achieve accessible, sustainable healthcare for British Columbians in remote and rural areas of B.C. The B.C. Greens would collaborate with industry to develop a Telehealth Delivery Strategy for patients in remote areas. The B.C. Greens also support initiatives that enable the safe transfer of medical records, a process essential to effective telemedicine.

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?

The B.C. Greens would collaborate with industry and the federal government to develop strategies to deal with the rising cost of pharmaceuticals and ensure patient access to appropriate therapies to improve their health outcomes. We will develop a proposal to implement an essential drugs program beginning in 2019, designed to reduce the costs of prescription drugs, increase access, and ensure the cost of drugs is not a barrier to health management.

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?

A B.C. Green government will establish a Ministry responsible for health promotion, disease prevention and active lifestyles, which will be responsible for delivering programs to prevent disease. We would require employers to make reasonable accommodation for people suffering from conditions that require flexible work arrangements, such as arthritis.

A B.C. Green government will establish a task force to develop a plan to transition the balance of resources between acute care and primary/preventative care. The task force will review the funding and range of services covered by the healthcare system to ensure the mix of services better meets the treatment and prevention needs of the population.

The task force will deliver its recommendations to the government by May 2019.

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?

The B.C. Green Party will implement a number of strategies to ensure timely, specialized care for patients with arthritis and to shorten wait times. We will establish an Innovation Task force to promote the application of best practices to reduce wait times across the province.

We will take steps to incentivize the training of in-demand health professionals, such as rheumatologists and arthritis trained allied health professionals in B.C. We will continuously assess demand for specialists and ensure that as arthritis cases grow, that patients are well-supported and that we are mitigating the strain on the health-care system.