



April 14, 2009

Dear Candidate:

Approximately 600,000 British Columbians live with some form of arthritis. It is on their behalf that I write to you today.

Significant inequities exist between services being provided to British Columbians living with arthritis and those living with other serious chronic diseases. In all areas of the healthcare system, from health promotion strategies to delivery of treatment and care, arthritis is vastly underserved.

You are likely not aware that arthritis affects more adults than cancer, heart disease, respiratory conditions or spinal cord trauma. Yet, for example, only 54 physicians in the province are identified as having received rheumatology training and having a practice of rheumatology care. Arthritis needs your attention, because while it touches almost 1 in 6 British Columbians, far fewer have access to the medical support they need.

People with arthritis—more than 600,000 voters— are looking to government for leadership on the arthritis crisis in British Columbia. As arthritis is currently a significantly underserved disease group, the next BC government has a tremendous opportunity to make British Columbia the best place in Canada to live with arthritis.

By addressing arthritis prevention, treatment, and care as an important issue in this election, you as a candidate, along with your party, have the opportunity to show leadership on this issue. Developing and implementing sound arthritis policies will save money and reduce pressure on hospitals and waitlists by decreasing or preventing disability in people with arthritis.

As a candidate seeking election, will you work to make BC the best place in Canada to live with arthritis?

Enclosed, please find a backgrounder on arthritis across Canada. We know you will be as concerned as we are about the issues facing people who live with arthritis in our province. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you in advance for your attention to this issue, and we very much look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheryl Koehn".

Cheryl Koehn
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