

Rachel Notley. Fighting for you

Arthritis Consumer Experts

Thank you for your survey. We are pleased to provide these responses on behalf of Rachel Notley and all Alberta NDP candidates.

1. *What will your government do to bring a high quality, standardized evidence-based model of arthritis care for all Alberta residents?*

Rachel Notley and the Alberta NDP strongly believe that every Albertan should have access to quality, timely, publicly-delivered health care when they need it. We understand the significant impacts of living with arthritis and are committed to finding ways to reduce painful arthritis symptoms. We have directed Alberta Health Services to seek out innovations and standardized treatment methods and we are encouraged by the progress of the Bone and Joint Health Strategic Clinical Network (BJHSCN). We will commit to expand the work of the Network, with a particular focus of improving access to coordinated care in regions outside of Edmonton and Calgary.

An important part of achieving better outcomes for Albertans living with arthritis is to ensure our health care system received stable, consistent funding. Freezing or cutting spending to health care will put innovations like better coordinated care at risk. The Alberta NDP are committed to ensuring that funding for health care keeps up with the growing demand in our province.

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

The BJHSCN is partnering with the Alberta Bone and Joint Health Institute and others to pilot and rollout the GLA:D model. Early results are proving very positive. We commit to expanding the availability of these programs in clinics across the province.

3. *What will your government do to improve the uptake of biosimilars and increase accessibility to life saving medications and reduce out-of-pocket costs for Alberta residents living with inflammatory arthritis?*

Rachel Notley and the Alberta NDP recognize that one of the biggest pressures for people living with arthritis is the cost of medications to control the condition. We have been working to make prescription drugs more affordable for Albertans. We negotiated a new deal with pharmacists that lowered the cost of many medications. If re-elected we commit to total drug coverage for Alberta seniors with incomes below \$75,000, eliminating the co-payment portion and saving the average senior \$200 per year. For those who have to access more expensive arthritis medication, their savings will be even higher.

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4. *What will your government do to improve health care and lives of Aboriginals living with arthritis in Alberta?*

During the first term, Rachel Notley and the Alberta NDP ensured funding for health care kept up with the growing needs of Albertans. We commit to continue to appropriate fund health care in the next four years. This funding includes resources targeted toward the health of Indigenous peoples in the province. We are committed to the goal of making sure Indigenous peoples receive the same level of services and health care as every other Albertan. Making cuts to health care will only make outcomes worse of Indigenous Albertans.

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

We are committed to building upon the recent success at educating Albertans about arthritis and will look at how we can effectively expand prevention programs to lower the incidence of arthritis over the long term. We are willing to work with arthritis advocates and health professionals to determine the best methods for educating the public and employers about the costs of arthritis and how we can address them.

6. *Will your government take steps to increase the number of rheumatologists and trained arthritis professionals to ensure timely, specialized care for Alberta patients with arthritis?*

A priority for Rachel Notley and the Alberta NDP is the effective functioning of Alberta's health system. That is why we have ensured stable and consistent funding for health care and why we commit that for the next four years we will continue to fund for the Alberta's growing population. Freezing or cutting health care funding means no new investments in doctors, nurses or other health professionals, which means longer wait times and fewer services for Albertans needing care. We are open to discussing with health professionals and arthritis advocates to determine the appropriate availability of health professionals to address the concerns of people living with arthritis.