



Newfoundland and Labrador  
New Democratic Party

P.O. Box 5275, Stn. C  
St. John's, NL A1C 5W1

Cheryl Koehn, President  
Arthritis Consumer Experts  
#210 – 529 West 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Vancouver, BC V6J 1R1

May 11, 2019

Dear Ms. Koehn:

Thank you for your questionnaire regarding arthritis. Our answers are below.

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

We want to see primary health care teams in every Community Health Centre, as they are the best model for addressing chronic conditions such as arthritis. Patients can get the help they need from physicians, nurses, counsellors, nutritionists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists in one location within a case management structure.

*2. 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?*

Exercise and education programs are essential, and GLA:D appears to be very successful for those with private health insurance. We would like to see such programs expanded at hospitals and Community Health Centres. Greater investment in physical conditioning would help avoid costly expenditures on knee and hip surgery.

*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 Newfoundland and Labrador residents living with inflammatory arthritis?*

Biosimilars are improving patient access to biologics and reducing their cost to governments. As these drugs become less expensive and more effective, it is reasonable to no subject patients to the special authorization process.

*4. What will your government do to improve the healthcare and lives of Aboriginals living with arthritis in Newfoundland and Labrador?*

We believe in equitable access to health care. We would work with Indigenous communities to ensure access to treatments to address high rates of arthritis.

*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 Newfoundland and Labrador employers and the Newfoundland and Labrador economy?*

We would increase the number of physical education classes in the early grades, and invest in and promote more affordable recreation opportunities for youth and adults in the community. We would also encourage workplaces to become ergonomic and to allow flexible schedules, working at home and other arrangements to keep people in their jobs.

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

We would like to see a provincial recruitment and retention strategy for physicians, including rheumatologists. We would support more training for health professionals to treat patients with arthritis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison Coffin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alison Coffin, Leader  
NL New Democratic Party