

**Share your plan for arthritis prevention, treatment and care in New Brunswick**

**Arthritis is *one word that describes more than 100 disease types* and affects New Brunswick residents. The time to address models of care in arthritis is now and it is critical. By 2025, it is estimated that one third of Canadian rheumatologists will retire, coupled with an anticipated growth in patient volume driven by an aging population. With the knowledge of the impact of early diagnosis and treatment on outcomes in rheumatologic diseases, the next elected New Brunswick government must improve the level of arthritis prevention, treatment and care.**

**Question 1**

Arthritis is Canada's most prevalent disease. And it's far more serious than most people realize. Approximately six million adults – one in five – have doctor-diagnosed arthritis. Two-thirds are under the age of 65. In fact, arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions are the leading cause of work disability in Canada. In New Brunswick, more than 150,000 residents are living with arthritis yet no standardized model of arthritis care is available.

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

**Question 2**

The Canadian Medical Association and the New Brunswick Medical Society released independent survey results this summer, showing that Canadians are embracing virtual care options and would like to see a continuation, improvement and expansion of virtual care after the COVID-19 pandemic subsides. A majority of respondents in both surveys believe virtual care could save costs in the health care system and improve access to specialists and timeliness of test results. This is important because many people with inflammatory arthritis live in locations where specialists are scarce and/or have difficulty traveling (due to symptoms like decreased mobility, imbalance or walking issues). Virtual care can address some of these challenges by bringing doctors into patients' homes or nearby clinics.

**What will your government do to ensure the continuation, improvement, and expansion of virtual care for all New Brunswick residents – both patients and health care professionals?**

### Question 3

The New Brunswick government must take steps to ensure the sustainability of prescription drug plans and the continued affordability of prescription medicines for New Brunswick residents. Biosimilars represent a potential source of significant cost savings to the health care system.

**What will your government do to improve the uptake of biosimilars and reinvest biosimilars cost savings to increase accessibility to new medicines and expand coverage for existing medicines for New Brunswick residents living with complex chronic disease like inflammatory arthritis?**

### Question 4

Indigenous peoples in Canada 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 indigenous arthritis care currently exist in New Brunswick.

**What will your government do to improve the healthcare and lives of Indigenous peoples living with arthritis in New Brunswick?**

### Question 5

Some individuals with severe arthritis require joint replacement surgery in order to achieve better quality of life, less pain and more joint function. According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), the guideline for knee and hip replacement is to receive surgery within 182 days; however, only 44% of knee replacements and 48% of hip replacements meet the guideline. This deeply impacts the lives of New Brunswick residents with arthritis who require these surgeries. The COVID-19 pandemic may have also caused delays in surgery wait times.

**Will your government take steps to ensure timely, specialized care for New Brunswick patients with arthritis, including joint surgery wait times that are within medically recommended guidelines? How will your government manage the backlog of surgical appointments that occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?**