

**Arthritis in Newfoundland and Labrador - Letter from Arthritis Consumer Experts to (name)**  
**Email sent out date: September 24, 2025**

Dear Party/Electoral Candidate,

**135,000 voters in Newfoundland and Labrador are waiting for answers on arthritis care.**

Arthritis is Newfoundland and Labrador's most common chronic disease and affects more people than heart disease, cancer, diabetes, stroke and dementia combined. There are more than 100 types of arthritis, and despite the misconception that it is only a disease of older adults, two-thirds of Newfoundland and Labrador residents with arthritis are younger than 65.

It is the leading cause of disability in Newfoundland and Labrador. Residents of working age with arthritis are twice as likely to be out of the workforce as their peers without the disease, representing a significant economic burden related to direct health care costs and indirect costs to the economy related to lost employment, sick leave, and absenteeism.

Rural residents, Indigenous Peoples, Black communities, women, and racialized communities can face the highest burden but the least access to care.

**In the lead up to the provincial election on October 14, 2025, Newfoundland and Labrador voters living with arthritis want you to share your plan for arthritis prevention, treatment, and care ([see attached survey](#)).**

Health care is one of the most important issues for Newfoundland and Labrador voters. The way people living with arthritis access and receive health care varies significantly across the province, particularly in rural and remote communities. This particularly affects residents living with inflammatory arthritis – like rheumatoid arthritis, axial spondyloarthritis, psoriatic arthritis or lupus – who depend on getting a timely and accurate diagnosis, fast access to rheumatologists, and appropriate public reimbursement for needed disease-modifying medications. Delays in diagnosis and access to advanced therapies can cause irreversible damage and disability.

Another barrier is timely access to specialized care for residents living with osteoarthritis. Over 99 per cent of knee replacements and more than 70 per cent of hip replacements are caused by arthritis. In Newfoundland and Labrador in 2024, only 33% of knee replacement patients and 41% of hip replacement patients were treated within medically recommended guidelines (within 26 weeks), well below the Canadian average. This deeply impacts the lives of Newfoundland and Labrador residents with osteoarthritis who require these surgeries.

To effectively treat and manage arthritis, the next elected Newfoundland and Labrador government must improve the access to the right arthritis treatment for the right patient at the right time. We look forward to sharing your response with the 135,000 voters and their families and employers in Newfoundland and Labrador affected by arthritis.

Yours sincerely,

Cheryl Koehn, President, Arthritis Consumer Experts  
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