

Share your plan for arthritis prevention, treatment and care in Manitoba

Arthritis is one word that describes more than 100 disease types and affects one in four Manitoba residents. To effectively treat and manage the most disabling and life-threatening types – osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis – the next elected Manitoba government must improve the level of arthritis prevention, treatment and care.

Question 1

More than 226,000 individuals are living with arthritis in Manitoba. The proportion of residents over age 15 with arthritis in Manitoba is higher than the national average, yet no standardized model of arthritis care is available. This is particularly pronounced outside of the greater Winnipeg metro region. Where you live can be more important in determining treatment than how sick or disabled you are.

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

Question 2

A 2016 study predicts that by 2031, osteoarthritis will cost the Canadian economy an estimated \$17.5 billion a year in lost productivity. Osteoarthritis forces people to stop working or work less due to pain, fatigue, and the demands of prescribed treatment therapies. The work time loss is significant because of the reducing number of workers available to replace retiring baby boomers after decades of low birth rates.

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?

Question 3

The new Manitoba government must take steps to ensure the sustainability of prescription drug plans and the continued affordability of prescription drugs for Manitoba 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 increase accessibility to life enhancing medicines and reduce out-of-pocket costs for Manitoba residents living with 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 Manitoba. For example, according to a report conducted by the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy in collaboration with the Manitoba Metis Federation, Metis have a higher arthritis prevalence provincially compared to all other Manitobans (24.2% vs. 19.9%).¹

What will your government do to improve the healthcare and lives of indigenous peoples living with arthritis in Manitoba?

Question 5

Arthritis is the leading cause of disability and work disability in Manitoba. About a quarter of the population with arthritis between 20 and 54 years of age in Manitoba were not in the labour force because of their arthritis, costing Manitoba's economy more than \$600 million in productivity losses.

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

Question 6

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), wait times for joint replacements in Manitoba significantly exceed the medically recommended guidelines of 6 months.² In fact, only 37% of knee replacements and 49% of hip replacements meet the guideline. This deeply impacts the lives of Manitobans with arthritis who require these surgeries.

Will your government take steps to ensure timely, specialized care for Manitoba patients with arthritis, including joint surgery wait times that are within medically recommended guidelines?

¹ Manitoba Centre for Health Policy in Collaboration with the Manitoba Metis Federation, University of Manitoba: http://www.mmf.mb.ca/docs/metis_health_status_report.pdf

² Canadian Institute for Health Information: <http://waittimes.cihi.ca/MB>