



Dear Arthritis Consumer Experts,

Thank you for taking the time to reach out to the Alberta NDP during this critical election period. We are grateful for your advocacy and efforts to ensure Albertans with arthritis are cared for and supported.

Currently, 800,000 Albertans are without a family doctor - this has to change. Family doctors are essential to the foundation of our healthcare system; when people have access to regular check-ups, they have better health outcomes. With the Alberta NDP, if you need a doctor, you will get to see a doctor, in a matter of days, for free and within your communities.

This is our commitment to Albertans.

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

Our comprehensive healthcare plan will create 40 family health teams clinics across the province. Family Health Teams operate using a physician-led team-based model that can provide specialized care.

Teams include a range of allied health professionals, nurses, and doctors, all working within their full scope of practice who can tailor patient care and offer specialized support. This can include a focus on chronic conditions, and providing educational support to patients with complex needs.

Our investments and modernization of primary care can mean better comprehensive care for people with arthritis.

What will your government do to ensure the continuation, improvement, and expansion of virtual care for all Alberta residents – both patients and healthcare professionals – and ensure access is equitable to all?

Virtual care is a flexible healthcare model that can be effective for patients who want it, and can help alleviate pressure on our healthcare system while supporting better health outcomes for patients. We will support the integration of virtual care through flexibility and funding for health professionals.

We will work with stakeholders to determine the best and most inclusive way forward, consulting on appropriate and accessible care for Indigenous and racialized people.

To support better access to virtual care, we will also deliver universal broadband access to all Albertans by 2027, to support underserved areas of the province.



Will your government introduce culturally appropriate, patient-centered policies, such as a patient care facilitator or “arthritis liaison,” to help Indigenous Peoples navigate the healthcare system and receive coordinated care within their community to manage their arthritis?

We absolutely agree that specific, culturally appropriate patient care facilitators are important and, if elected, we would be interested in discussing further with you.

As a part of our robust healthcare plan, we will consult with Indigenous communities on how to best support Indigenous-led healthcare, and expand culturally appropriate care. We will create an Indigenous health fund for community-led projects that could support Indigenous and community health navigators, health oversight programs, or complaint investigators who come from and are trusted by Indigenous communities.

Our Family Health Teams plan also incorporates community health navigators, and clinics can include a focus on arthritis care where this is needed.

One of our flagship projects will be a Family Teaching Clinic in Lethbridge to bring more medical students and residents to serve Southern Alberta. We will consult with the Blood Tribe and Indigenous communities on establishing an Indigenous Centre of Excellence in Primary Care. By building on the MOU between the University of Lethbridge and Blood Tribe Health, the Indigenous Centre of Excellence in Primary Care would be co-created to train doctors in culturally appropriate care that meets the needs of the community.

Will your government take steps to ensure timely, specialized care for Alberta residents struggling with osteoarthritis, including joint replacement surgery (hip and knee) wait times that are within medically recommended guidelines?

We will reduce surgery wait times by investing in frontline, public healthcare. The Parkland Institute recently released a report noting that under the UCP, Alberta has one of the worst performances in Canada when it comes to reducing surgical wait times. While Danielle Smith has said she will sell hospitals, we will work to staff them.

The Alberta NDP will undertake the largest healthcare workforce recruitment and retention campaign Alberta has ever seen. This will include up to \$10,000 signing bonuses for new healthcare workers and creating up to 10,000 new post-secondary spaces. We will also establish a Health Innovation Fund to bring new treatment options to Albertans faster.

We will also reduce pressure and wait times for ERs and EMS services by providing better access to preventative care through Family Health Teams.



What will your government do to improve access to early treatment and pain management for rural residents in Alberta living with osteoarthritis who are at risk for increased disease severity and reduced quality of life?

We will ensure healthcare is available to people in their communities when they need it. Our commitment will work to end the chronic hospital closures we've seen under the UCP by recruiting and retaining healthcare workers.

Our Family Health Teams will be located in communities across the province in 40 clinics, and through this model we can further tailor resources to meet the unique needs of the community. This model will provide the highest quality care possible for patients while supporting the well-being of healthcare providers.

The Alberta NDP is committed to building a better future and better healthcare for all. Thank you for your time and consideration,

The Alberta NDP