



Sept. 28, 2023

Cheryl Koehn, president
Arthritis Consumer Experts
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Dear Ms. Koehn,

Thank you for engaging in this critical election. We appreciate the advocacy from Arthritis Consumer Experts and all that your members do to serve Manitoba families. We are happy to respond to your questions.

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

The Manitoba NDP knows that today, too many people are suffering from pain and disability due to arthritis and unable to fully participate in the lives of their families and communities.

We'll make it a priority to work with non-profit organizations and healthcare experts to use best practices to offer the best model of care available.

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

After seven years of cuts by the Pallister-Stefanson government, the healthcare system is in crisis. Doctors and nurses are overwhelmed and burned out, leaving little room to develop new virtual care models. But we know that virtual care will be an increasingly important tool for patients and healthcare providers now and in the future.

The Manitoba NDP will address the crisis in healthcare by training and recruiting hundreds more doctors and nurses. We will support more primary care teams staffed by doctors, nurse practitioners, mental-health workers, and pharmacists offering family friendly hours. These teams will be able to establish the virtual links needed for convenient care.

As well, the Manitoba NDP will work to expand broadband access across the province. This will help connect patients in remote communities and rural areas to medical teams and specialists.

Will your government introduce culturally appropriate, patient-centred 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?

The Manitoba NDP supports working with Indigenous communities to introduce culturally appropriate, patient-centred policies led by communities themselves, including staff who can help Indigenous people navigate the healthcare system and ensure they receive the care they need.

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

The Manitoba NDP will recruit more nurses and doctors with the largest recruitment campaign in Manitoba history. We’ll train more nurses and doctors with a new state-of-the-art training facility at the University of Manitoba’s Bannatyne campus. We’ll fill the vacancies across the healthcare system and listen to the medical professionals who know best how to reduce wait times for joint surgery.

As part of our long-term investment at Concordia, upon forming government we will immediately establish step-down beds with higher nurse-to-patient ratios and enhanced monitoring to help patients recovering from surgery in order to increase surgical capacity and allow for more complex surgeries. We will also increase surgical capacity at the Grace Hospital to deliver better care.

What will your government do to improve the uptake of biosimilars, and will you commit to reinvest those savings to support additional medication listings and improve patient coverage?

Prescription drugs can be expensive, particularly for the treatment of chronic diseases. We want to improve Manitoba's prescription drug coverage.

The Manitoba NDP will follow expert advice to help improve access to all treatment and medication options. And we'll work with the federal government to ensure all patients are able to access the drugs they need when they need them.

Thank you again for giving us the opportunity to respond. The Manitoba NDP look forward to working with you and other healthcare partners to move towards a shared vision for a future when people with arthritis can access the treatment they need in a timely manner and continue to live full lives in their communities.

Sincerely,

The Manitoba NDP