



Question 1 -- If elected, what will your government do to ensure better and faster access to arthritis care and treatment?

Nobody should have to pay out-of-pocket for their prescription medications. That's why Canada needs a strong, single-payer universal pharmacare program.

Me and my NDP colleagues want to see Canada's pharmacare system expanded to cover all essential medicines, including arthritis medication. We know that improving access to medications will save Canadians money and help to lower healthcare expenses by keeping people out of emergency rooms and preventing other more costly interventions.

Question 2 - If elected, how will your government ensure provinces and territories adhere to agreed-upon surgical wait time targets and implement best practice, as well as offer effective joint replacement prevention education at a population level?

The NDP will ensure every Canadian has access to primary care through a comprehensive Healthcare Workforce Strategy that retains and hires more doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers. Our first step will be to guarantee that all Canadians can get access to primary care and a family doctor within 5 years, by 2030. By hiring more family doctors and specialists, especially internationally trained doctors and fast tracking those coming from the United States, we can cut wait times for important procedures.

Question 3 - If elected, how will your government work with provincial and territorial governments to standardize arthritis health data, so access and quality of care are consistently measured, evaluated and reported on across the country?

New Democrats will work with provinces and doctors to reduce burdensome administrative bureaucracy imposed on medical practitioners to streamline health information sharing and input as it takes time away from patients. This includes streamlining and coordinating with provinces on paperwork such as benefits forms, sick notes, and other federal government paperwork, centralizing public sector administration that helps care providers and patients. Through working with provinces and territories on a pan-Canadian licensure for medical professionals, we will need to include measures to coordinate health data across Canada.

Question 4 - If elected, what culturally appropriate, patient-centered policies will your government introduce to help Indigenous Peoples navigate the healthcare system and receive coordinated care within their community to manage their arthritis?

People living in rural, remote, northern and Indigenous communities face far higher barriers to receiving medical care. According to the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada, the doctor-patient ratio for these communities is less than half that of urban communities.

Representing a rural area with the highest population of Indigenous people in BC, this issue is close to my heart. New Democrats will train more doctors from underserved areas, including rural and remote communities. We will do this by investing in regional medical schools based in underserved urban, rural, and remote communities, breaking down barriers and delivering grants to underserved communities, and expanding efforts to match these medical students, delivering fair wages for doctors committed to these communities. We will increase the number



of Indigenous professionals working in the health care field and provide cultural competency training for all health care professionals. With Indigenous medical professionals, from Indigenous communities and for Indigenous communities, cultural competencies, community retention and higher service levels will be built by a New Democratic government.

Question 5 - If elected, will your government increase arthritis research funding to align with the disease's prevalence and impact and support high impact areas, including precision medicine, arthritis prevention, population health data and Indigenous arthritis health research?

Given development in the United States, and comments made by the Conservative leader about cutting research funding, an NDP government is committed to supporting academics and researchers in establishing themselves in Canada, in all fields including medical research that is under attack by the Trump administration. Family doctors, specialists in reproductive health, and health researchers in epidemiology should be fast tracked to continue their practice and research in Canada where it is in high demand to reinforce our public healthcare system against Americanization. Along with increased research funding and support for other conditions, arthritis research will be supported by improved scientific research and development leadership by an NDP government.