



Cheryl Koehn, President  
Arthritis Consumer Experts  
#210 - 1529 West 6th Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V6J 1R1

September 30, 2025

Dear Ms. Koehn,

Thank you for reaching out to the NL NDP for our position on support for those with arthritis. I hope the answers below will satisfactorily answer your questions.

**1. If elected, will your government ensure that hip and knee joint replacement patients in NL are treated within the CIHI guideline of 26 weeks?**

Our NLNDP is proud of our public healthcare system, but after decades of cuts and mismanagement of our healthcare system, a quarter of our population has no family doctor, waiting lists are dangerously long, and the people we rely on to take care of us are forced out of jobs they love because working conditions are unbearable.

We believe there is a better deal for patients and healthcare workers. We will listen to the people who actually work in healthcare because they know how to fix the problems they face every day.

We will launch our “*NL Cares*” health plan to recruit an additional 1000 healthcare workers over four years -bolstering our frontline staff and getting patients the care they need, and especially when they need it.

Additionally, we will reduce the burden on health care workers and professionals within the system by making it a priority to recruit Allied Health professionals and others to reduce workloads.

We will:

- Make primary care more accessible in rural and remote areas by expanding the nurse travel locum program province wide.
- Create 20 new seats at MUN’s Medical School.
- Implement support and mentorship systems for new health profession graduates.
- Restore the full-time recruiter position in the MUN Medical School for physicians and hire two new ones specifically devoted to nursing schools.

- Merge the new recruiters and those in the regions of NL Health Services into a single Office for Medical Professional Recruitment, so that they avoid duplicating effort and work together on common goals while sharing expertise and resources.
- Start recruitment initiatives early, by building relationships with medical and nursing students in their first year; and
- Create bursaries and accommodations allowances to ensure that vacant seats in smaller nursing schools outside St. John's and Corner Brook are filled every year.

**2. If elected, will your party remove outdated barriers that delay patient access to biological and tsDMARD therapies, and modernize the NL Prescription Drug Program?**

If elected, we commit to working alongside organizations like yours to work towards a federal Pharmacare and understand potential changes and modernization for the NL prescription Drug program.

**3. If elected, will your government ensure Indigenous Peoples with arthritis have access to culturally safe, community-based care models to close existing gaps and improve outcomes.**

Although the NL NDP Platform does not specifically speak to Indigenous Peoples with arthritis, we are committed to undertaking the important work of reconciliation in good faith, and in true and equal partnership with Indigenous communities.

We will advance healing by implementing all the provincially applicable Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including those that close the health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, recognizing and respecting Indigenous healing practices, providing sustainable funding for Indigenous healing centres, and increasing the number of health-care professionals.

We also support calls for mandatory Indigenous health education for medical and nursing students to build cultural competency.

If elected, we look forward to working alongside your organization and others to build understanding and identify a path forward with regards to culturally safe arthritis treatments for Indigenous Peoples.

**4. If elected, will your government commit to reinvesting biosimilars savings to increase accessibility to new medicines and expand coverage for existing medicines for people living with inflammatory arthritis?**

Like question 2, the NL NDP will consult with your organization and others as to which medications ought to be included in a modernized NL Prescription Plan.

We will continue to urge the Federal government to come through on its long-time promise for a universal, single-payer, public pharmacare program as part of our public health care system

**5. If elected, will your government ensure the continuation, improvement, and expansion of virtual care for NL residents – both patients and health care professionals – and ensure access is equitable to all?**

Yes. Existing federal-provincial funding and agreements already include initiatives to improve connectivity and expand virtual care. These efforts provide equitable access to health information and services for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and align with our push for timely and accessible care for all.

The NL NDP will build on these existing frameworks to further improve and expand virtual care accessibility for residents and healthcare professionals.

Once again, I thank you for your interest in the NL NDP campaign, and encourage you to reach out in the future with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Scott Fleming, Head of Research

NL NDP Campaign Team



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