

Green Party of Ontario
June 4, 2018

Thank you for your questionnaire. The questions were researched by the Green Party policy analysts, who have provided these answers.

Dear Cheryl,

Thanks for the opportunity to respond to your important questions. Just today, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance – an advocacy group for people with disabilities, rated the Greens platform to be the most comprehensive of all the parties.

“The AODA Alliance’s analysis shows that the Green Party makes the broadest commitments, ... Trailing notably further back are the Liberals...”

<https://www.aodaalliance.org/whats-new/news-release-major-disability-coalition-unveils-the-parties-2018-election-pledges-on-accessibility-for-1-9-million-ontarians-with-disabilities/>

The main pillar of our platform relevant to those who suffer from arthritis is our commitment to push for a Federally funded pharmacare program and in the absence of that to expand provincial pharmacare to cover all Ontarians. Our Vision Green platform provides far more details and can be obtained at <https://gpo.ca/vision/> Below I address your specific questions as best I can.

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

The Greens are committed to evidence based decision making in all aspects of governance – but it is particularly crucial in delivering a comprehensive health care system to all Ontarians.

2. 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?

We are dedicated to increasing the number of nurse practitioners and we strongly support nurse-led community clinics that are the best way to reach people where they live and deliver education and support programs they desperately need.

3. What will your government do to improve the uptake of biosimilars and increase accessibility to life saving medications and reduce out-of-pocket costs for Ontario residents living with inflammatory arthritis?

Our commitment to a comprehensive pharmacare program for all Ontarians would be built explicitly on the best available evidence for drug and treatment efficacy. Where biosimilars provide the best first-line treatment we would support the adoption of these medications

under our pharmacare program.

4. What will your government do to improve the healthcare and lives of Aboriginals living with arthritis in Ontario?

The Green Party wants to make sure that every person in Ontario has access to the best possible care, when and where they need it. This clearly includes improving services to Indigenous peoples living in more remote regions. We would achieve this by increasing the number of Indigenous health care and education professionals and engage efforts to support retention of these professionals within Indigenous communities.

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

The Greens would fully implement the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act by preparing an enforcement plan, allocating resources for enforcement and supporting a public awareness campaign. This Act explicitly supports flexible work arrangements that would improve the opportunities for those living with arthritis to maintain employment. We would also develop and fund research into smart home technology. Not only would this allow people to stay in their homes longer, it would also enable flexible workplace arrangements.

6. Will your government take steps to increase the number of rheumatologists and arthritis trained allied health professionals to ensure timely, specialized care for Ontario patients with arthritis?

We support expansion of Nurse Practitioner and Registered Nurse numbers within the province. These professionals are broadly trained and would be expected to have expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of arthritis. As I already mentioned, we also see nurse-led community clinics as an excellent way to deliver support and education to local communities where it is needed most.

We are also committed to comprehensive primary health care as the foundation of our health care system. Every Ontarian should have timely access to a primary health care provider. We also support health promotion and illness prevention measures as a foundation of a sustainable health care system – as the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Our policies explicitly place community well-being at the core of our health system.

Bob Jonkman
Green Party Candidate of Kitchener-Conestoga