



18 April 2019

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

Dear Cheryl,

Thank you for your letter providing information on the importance of arthritis prevention, treatment and care in Prince Edward Island.

Please find attached the Green Party responses to the Arthritis Consumer Experts' questions. I welcome any feedback from your membership regarding our party's policies.

Sincerely,

Peter Bevan-Baker
Leader, Green Party of PEI

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

The Green Party is committed to strong evidence-based decision making. During this election campaign we have confirmed that healthcare is a primary concern for all Islanders. We are committed to enhancing the availability of health services in a more coordinated and holistic manner. This is especially important in the treatment of chronic disease such as arthritis. A Green government would be establishing health care hubs in rural hospitals to enhance service integration by co-locating a broad range of services including diagnosis, treatment, and support for managing both acute and chronic illnesses.

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?

The Green Party is committed to working hard to provide a range of preventative services to Island residents. At the moment we have a health care system that focuses far too much on crisis intervention rather than prevention or patient-managed maintenance. We would be very interested in learning more about any programs that could empower the patient and reduce the need for drugs or surgical interventions.

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 Prince Edward Island residents living with inflammatory arthritis?

Access to prescription drugs continues to be a challenge within our healthcare system. We are committed to lobbying the Federal government for a national pharmacare program. We will also continue to review the provincial formulary with the aim of making medication more accessible to Islanders.

What will your government do to improve the healthcare and lives of Aboriginals living with arthritis in Prince Edward Island?

We recognize that Indigenous people live with much higher instances of chronic illness. We appreciate that in many ways our medical system has failed to treat Indigenous people with appropriate care and we believe that our role is to support communities to map their own healing journeys. We believe that programs and services for Indigenous people should be developed and provided by Indigenous people, and we will work with stakeholders to achieve that vision.

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

We will work with stakeholders to ensure that our current systems do not create disincentives or unnecessary barriers to Islanders living with arthritis from fully participating in the workforce. We are also committed to providing a secure income to Islanders who are unable to enter the workforce due to long-term disabilities. We would also conduct a red-tape review of all disability support services to ensure they are being offered in a client-centered way, that encourages clients to participate as fully as possible both economically and socially.

Will your government take steps to increase the number of rheumatologists and trained arthritis professionals to ensure timely, specialized care for Prince Edward Island patients with arthritis?

The recruitment and retention of medical professionals is a priority for the Green Party of PEI. We will develop models of remuneration and benefits that enhance our ability to recruit new physicians, and actively recruit medical residents and specialists to train and work on PEI. We will also provide health professionals with the opportunity to work to their full scope of practice, so patients will have better access to the services they need.