

**Arthritis in Nova Scotia – A letter to (name)**

**Email sent out date: November 1, 2024**

**Letter from Arthritis Consumer Experts**

Dear Electoral Candidate,

The arthritis community is a significant constituency in Nova Scotia.

Arthritis affects approximately 200,000 Nova Scotia voters and affects more people than heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and dementia - combined. There are more than 100 types of arthritis, and despite the misconception that it is only a disease of older adults, two-thirds of Nova Scotians with arthritis are younger than 65. It is the leading cause of disability in Nova Scotia and a significant economic burden related to direct health care costs and indirect costs to the economy related to lost employment, sick leave, and absenteeism.

In the lead up to the provincial election on November 26, 2024, Arthritis Consumer Experts is asking Nova Scotia political parties and the candidates running for office to share their perspectives on how to meet the needs of the one in five Nova Scotia residents living with arthritis ([see attached survey](#)).

Health care delivery is one of the most important issues for Nova Scotia voters. The way people living with arthritis access and receive health care varies significantly across the province. Where you live can be more important in determining arthritis treatment than how sick or disabled you are. This particularly affects people living with inflammatory arthritis – like rheumatoid arthritis, axial spondyloarthritis, psoriatic arthritis or lupus – who depend on getting a timely and accurate diagnosis, fast access to rheumatologists, and appropriate public reimbursement for needed disease-modifying medications.

Nova Scotia's healthcare system and economy are already under tremendous pressure. Without intervention, a serious issue like arthritis can escalate into a far bigger crisis. To effectively treat and manage arthritis, the next elected Nova Scotia government must improve the level of arthritis prevention, treatment, and care.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Cheryl Koehn, President, Arthritis Consumer Experts

Email: [koehn@jointhealth.org](mailto:koehn@jointhealth.org)