

Share your plan for arthritis prevention, treatment and care in Newfoundland & Labrador

Arthritis is *one* word that describes *more than 100 disease types* and affects one in five Newfoundland & Labrador residents. Arthritis is the leading cause of work disability in Newfoundland & Labrador and the rest of Canada. The time to address models of care in arthritis is now and it is critical. By 2025, it is estimated that one third of Canadian rheumatologists will retire, coupled with an anticipated growth in patient volume driven by an aging population. With the knowledge of the positive impact of early diagnosis and treatment on outcomes in rheumatologic diseases, the next elected Newfoundland & Labrador government must improve the level of arthritis prevention, treatment and care.

Question 1

Arthritis affects more than 120,000 Newfoundland & Labrador residents aged 15 years and above, yet no comprehensive model of arthritis care is available. This is particularly pronounced outside of the St. Johns metro regions. Where you live can be more important in determining treatment than how sick or disabled you are. Approximately one in five Newfoundland & Labrador residents have doctor-diagnosed arthritis. Two-thirds are under the age of 65.

What will your government do to bring a high quality, accessible, standardized evidence-based model of arthritis care for all Newfoundland & Labrador residents?

Question 2

Canadians are embracing virtual care options and would like to see a continuation, improvement and expansion of virtual care after the COVID-19 pandemic subsides. Virtual care could save costs in the health care system and improve access to specialists and timeliness of test results. This is important because many people with inflammatory arthritis live in locations where specialists are scarce and/or have difficulty traveling (due to symptoms like decreased mobility, imbalance or walking issues). Virtual care can address some of these challenges by bringing doctors into patients' homes or nearby clinics.

What will your government do to ensure the continuation, improvement, and expansion of virtual care for all Newfoundland & Labrador residents – both patients and health care professionals?

Question 3

ACE's Arthritis Medications Report Card is designed to help Canadians evaluate where their province ranks in terms of providing reimbursement for medications approved for inflammatory arthritis such as rheumatoid arthritis, axial spondyloarthritis, psoriatic arthritis and juvenile idiopathic arthritis. Newfoundland & Labrador ranks ninth on the Report Card where 28 medications are currently "under review," including nine medications for the treatment of types of inflammatory arthritis.

What will your government do to improve the Province's ranking on the ACE Report Card?

Question 4

The Newfoundland & Labrador government must take steps to ensure the sustainability of prescription drug plans and the continued affordability of prescription medicines for Newfoundland & Labrador residents. Biosimilars represent a potential source of significant cost savings to the health care system. These savings could be reinvested to increase accessibility to new medicines and expand coverage for existing medicines for Newfoundland & Labrador residents living with complex chronic disease like inflammatory arthritis.

What will your government do to improve the uptake of biosimilars and will you commit to reinvest those savings to support additional medication listings and improve patient coverage?

Question 5

Indigenous peoples in Canada have some of the highest rates of serious or life-threatening arthritis in the world, and are at greater risk for becoming disabled by arthritis. Significant gaps in indigenous arthritis care currently exist in Newfoundland & Labrador

What will your government do to improve the healthcare and lives of Indigenous peoples living with arthritis in Newfoundland & Labrador?