

The response from the Quebec Liberal Party was provided in French and translated into English by ACE.

Quebec, September 17, 2022

BY EMAIL

Mrs. Cheryl Koehn
President
Arthritis Consumer Experts
koehn@jointhehealth.org

Subject: Caring for patients with arthritis

Dear Mrs. Koehn:

Following the unveiling of our election platform on June 11th, which we urge you to review at www.plq.org, we can now confirm that access to health care and social services is a key component of this campaign.

Timely access to arthritis care

In an effort to counterbalance the offloading operations of Coalition Avenir Québec, the Quebec Liberal Party is proposing a twofold recovery plan:

- A blitz of diagnostic tests, such as for colon, lung and cervical cancer;
- A jump start on surgeries, including for cancer and orthopedic procedures.

To achieve this, we must first increase the capacity of our health care system. To do so, we will invest an additional \$6 billion in the network infrastructure, namely by adding 4,000 beds. There are currently 1.8 beds per 1,000 people in the province of Quebec. These investments will bring us back to a level comparable to the rest of Canada and the G7 countries.

This is a medium-term solution, but we will also need to increase our capacity in the short term. We will enter into agreements with as many private clinics as possible to act as an

emergency relief measure for the health care system. This will allow patients to be treated more quickly in these clinics, at no cost.

To ensure that all of these efforts translate into additional patient care, Quebec needs to step up its workforce. This is not a simple issue to address, but it must be seriously looked at from several perspectives, including:

- Ending mandatory overtime;
- Ensuring better working conditions for nurses by implementing safer staff-patient ratios;
- Increasing nursing and medical enrolment, especially in remote areas;
- Tripling the number of nurse practitioner specialists (NPs) in the system by 2030;
- Accelerating the process of obtaining Quebec Selection Certificates (QSC) for temporary foreign workers and foreign students who have graduated in Quebec in the health and social services fields;
- Implementing a recruitment campaign in other provinces to attract trained personnel to Quebec;
- Coordinating an aggressive campaign abroad for job positions that are highly in demand, such as anesthetists, institutional pharmacists, respiratory therapists and nurses;
- Working to accelerate the recognition of foreign diplomas.

Improving access to treatment

The Quebec Liberal Party is sensitive to the issue of access to treatment for arthritis. We intend to give further consideration to telemedicine solutions, which we hope will be accessible to all and rolled out more quickly.

Recognition of indigenous practices

Action must be taken once and for all to ensure that First Nations and Inuit people have access to health care and social services that adapt to their realities. The sad episode of Joyce Echaquan's death has shaken us all. However, follow-up actions have been slow to take place, despite the publication of The Joyce Principle by the Atikamekw Nation Council.

The Joyce Principle aims to ensure that all Indigenous people have the right to equitable access, without discrimination, to all health care and social services, and the right to the highest attainable standard of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.

The Joyce Principle requires recognition and respect for Indigenous peoples' traditional and living knowledge and understanding of health. More broadly, we want to listen to Indigenous peoples and have an action-oriented dialogue.

While Joyce Echaquan's death sent shockwaves through the health care system, decisions had been emerging for some time without being listened to or heard with any degree of seriousness. We must and can do more.

That is why the Quebec Liberal Party is committed to implementing The Joyce Principle and working with the entire health and social services network to end systemic racism.

We thank you for your interest in our vision and assure you that your questions/issues will be carefully reviewed in order to provide Quebecers with a plan that brings people together and meets everyone's needs.

Yours truly,

The Liberal party team