

NDP Response: Arthritis Society

What steps will your party take to ensure Canadians have equitable and affordable access to a broad range of treatments wherever they live in Canada? Will your party ensure that patients are at the table as Canada moves towards the development of national pharmacare?

As the Leader of Canada's New Democratic Party, I am eager to share the bold vision we have to expand health care for all Canadians.

The NDP wants to extend Medicare to cover Canadians from head-to-toe, starting with moving forward urgently on our national, universal pharmacare program, Medication for All, and immediately covering 4.3 million Canadians who are now without any dental-care coverage.

No Canadian, regardless of where they live or how much money they have, should have to choose between paying their groceries or paying for life-saving health services. For example, elderly Canadians who live on fixed incomes and have complex health-care needs that include arthritis shouldn't have to live in chronic pain because they can't afford to pay for their medications. And young families shouldn't have to live in fear of a child getting sick because they cannot afford the costs of medication.

Affordability and equity are principles at the heart of New Democrats' unwavering commitment to public health care. Universal access to public health care is one of the proudest achievements of the New Democratic Party and something cherished by all Canadians.

A New Democrat government will ensure patients and their lived experiences are actively involved in the consultation process while we move forward to implement pharmacare by the end of 2020.

And nurses, doctors, health professionals, patients and other stakeholders will be at the centre of consultations as we move forward to expand Medicare to cover dental, vision, and mental health care. New Democrats will always put the needs of patients first – ahead of the profit margins of big pharmaceutical corporations and the lobbying of highly-profitable insurance companies.

Will your party ease the burden on people with arthritis by removing the taxes on medical cannabis, and provide improved care by enabling access through pharmacies?

In it for you • On se bat pour vous

NDP  NDP
**Jagmeet
Singh**

The NDP has been clear that the federal government shouldn't tax patients who are prescribed medical cannabis to safely manage their chronic health conditions. We will stand with patients and exempt medical cannabis from excise taxes, something the Liberals callously rejected.

The NDP also tabled a motion (M-198) in the last Parliament to recognize health care as a fundamental human right – so no one is denied access to the prescription drugs they need to be healthy. We are calling for medical cannabis to be considered as medication and for research funds to be allocated to studying this treatment.

The NDP is committed to removing barriers that make it harder to access prescribed medications, including medical cannabis. Our government will work with provinces, territories, pharmacists, and patients to determine ways to help patients get better access to medical cannabis and ensure that they are properly informed about effective medication management.

What actions will your party take to reduce wait times for joint replacement surgery? Will you increase the Canada Health Transfer to help address joint replacement wait times across the country?

Jagmeet Singh and the New Democrats will take strong federal leadership and increase federal investments in health care urgently, not years from now.

Our New Deal for People invests \$2.9 billion additional funds to provinces over the next four years to reduce wait times, and expand long-term care and home care. Additionally, we will be moving forward on pharmacare, currently the number one growing cost for health-care spending, with over \$10 billion a year for our universal, comprehensive Medication for All program. This will also relieve substantial strains on provincial health-care spending, allowing for greater investments in measures to reduce wait times.

And we will invest over \$4 billion over the next four years covering dental care for Canadians who aren't now covered, which will also relieve some of the crowding in emergency rooms across the country.

Together, these measures will help provinces address wait times for joint replacement surgery. In contrast, Stephen Harper's Conservatives unilaterally cut healthcare transfers to the provinces by over \$30 billion. And instead of reversing these cuts, like he promised, Justin Trudeau's Liberals moved forward and implemented Harper's health cuts. New Democrats are different. We believe our Medicare system is a cherished Canadian value and we will invest in expanding it, not cutting it like Liberals and Conservatives have done.

In it for you • On se bat pour vous

NDP  **NDP**
Jagmeet
Singh