

Question 1: Chronic Disease Management

According to a March 21 Angus Reid poll, healthcare (20%) is the number two issue, after the economy (26%) on the minds of BC voters. (The environment is a distant third at 9%). That means one in five British Columbians believe that healthcare is the most important issue facing BC today and will evaluate the parties' position on healthcare when deciding who to vote for.

If elected, will your government ensure patients' choice and access to needed medications will not be limited by restrictive policies such as reference-based pricing?

The Green Party of BC intends to guarantee patient access to needed medications through the use of the 'Triple Aim' approach. The goals of this approach are to improve population health and reduce health inequalities; to improve the patient experience and the quality of care; and to reduce healthcare costs. The BC Greens intend to increase the number of primary healthcare centres by reducing and capping executive pay scale and reviewing the number of executive positions. BC Greens also want to move away from a fee-for-service model of paying doctors to an increased use of salaries and other methods of remuneration. Additionally, the Green Party of BC is considering establishing a new Crown Corporation to bulk purchase, and distributing medications to pharmacies in BC improving access to needed medications.

Question 2: PharmaCare Drug Reviews

On average between 2004-2010, BC has approved for public reimbursement 18.28% of the 306 new drugs approved by Health Canada, compared to the cross-country provincial average for the same period of 23.44% (*Access Delayed, Access Denied: Waiting for New Medicines in Canada, Mark Rovere and Brett J. Skinner, Studies in Health Policy, April 2012, The Fraser Institute*).

If elected, will your government commit to increasing the number of new chronic disease medications and other drugs approved for public reimbursement so that all British Columbians have timely access to the drugs they need, and if so, how will this be accomplished?

The Green Party of BC will commit to reviewing the new medications being made available and will consider the feasibility of establishing a new Crown Corporation to bulk purchase and dispense generic drugs to pharmacies in BC. Furthermore the Green Party of BC intends to replace the five health authorities in BC with up to fourteen Regional Health Trusts based on the demographic and geographic realities of BC. Additionally a health ombudsperson will be appointed to investigate and resolve complaints to ensure fairness and equitable access as well as resolve complaints.

Question 3: Patient Input

Patients and patient organizations have a right to provide input on therapies that have the potential to incrementally or significantly improve their health.

If elected, will your government protect and make transparent the patient input mechanism in BC's drug review process?

All people have the right to make a statement in areas that concern them or the people they care for, and all of these statements should be considered before any major decision is made. The Green Party of BC supports an independent review of all public reporting, in the medical sector, to ensure transparency and accountability.

Question 4: First Nations Health

According to Health Canada, aboriginal British Columbians are more likely than non-Aboriginals to have chronic disease, and their disease tends to be more disabling.

If elected, what would your government do to improve access to treatment for aboriginal people in BC, especially those living in rural/remote areas?

It is well known that the First Nations of BC are a very underprivileged group and the Green Party of BC intends to work with them as partners to address their needs. The BC Greens intend to invest in First Nations economic development, to honour existing treaty rights, and to support First Nations consultation to develop solutions for eliminating the disparity and inequality of life experienced by First Nations communities. The Green Party of BC plans on improving access to provincial medical services for members of the Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP, other federal employees, and to First Nations health programs in BC; as well as encouraging ongoing Health Canada investment in First Nations health programs in BC. The previously mentioned replacement of the five health authorities in BC with fourteen regional trusts should help to alleviate pressures brought on by regional concentration instead on community by community solutions.