

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.?

Response

We have released our priorities for health care, including improving care for seniors, people with disabilities and people with chronic and complex conditions, and improving coverage of prescription drugs. This includes expanding patients' access to effective treatments through implementing measures to lower costs and apply evidence based research.

We also view physicians' ability to access special authorizations under Pharmacare as critical to ensuring patients receive specific treatments that will directly benefit them.

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?

Response

Drug approvals need to be determined by an arms-length process that evaluates independent research.

To improve British Columbians' access to effective, safe medications, we will implement measures to lower costs and apply evidence based research.

Other measures an NDP government will take to improve the care people with chronic diseases receive include:

- 1. Improving home support and community care by expanding home support and community care for seniors, people with disabilities and people with chronic and complex conditions.**
- 2. Strengthening primary and community health services to relieve pressure on acute care, especially in rural areas, and improve access to multi-disciplinary health clinics and teams including nurse practitioners, rehabilitation professionals, psychologists, social workers, midwives and other health professionals.**
- 3. Developing a Rural Acute Care Initiative to improve acute care and emergency services in hospitals across BC, and rebuild basic surgery, obstetrics, diagnostics and critical care in targeted rural hospitals.**

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?

Response

Patient input mechanisms are already part of BC's drug review process, and will remain so.

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?

Response

An NDP government will improve care for those living with chronic conditions and increase access to primary care services, especially for those living in rural or remote areas.

The BC NDP understands that fighting the inequalities faced by First Nations and Aboriginal people and meeting the challenges ahead are critical to BC's future. We believe that real progress can be made in the next four years by working with First Nations peoples, Metis and Aboriginal groups towards a better future for our province.