

Jone Mitchell
Executive Director, Atlantic Region
Arthritis Society

Dear Ms. Mitchell,

Thank you for your correspondence of January 27, 2021. I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Arthritis Society for the support and programs provided to individuals who have arthritis and for the advocacy the organization carries out their behaves.

COVID-19 and the resultant public health restrictions have been a challenge for many in our community. It has also resulted in a back-log of medical tests and procedures. As you have accurately pointed out, the wait time for a joint replacement surgery is too long. While individuals are awaiting their procedure, their quality of life is suffering. A government I lead will address this issue.

A PC Government will work with our regional health authorities, medical professionals, and the Arthritis Society to develop a strategy to improve wait times and access to joint replacement surgery. We will strive to implement a plan which will result in meeting the medically recommended guidelines.

I believe in collaboration. I believe that this plan can only be created by hearing from those who have been impacted by long wait times and my hearing from those who can help create solutions. I am hopeful that by putting advocates, patients, administrators, doctors, and other health care providers in the same room that we can identify the problems in the system and can then work towards overcoming them.

In addition to this, I wish to draw your attention to my recently announced program of province wide primary health care teams. These health care teams will be available in all regions of the province and will provide compassionate and continuous care to their patients. Health care teams will increase access to health care right across the province.

I anticipate that by increasing access to health care, we will be able to better provide access to arthritis care as these health care teams can liaise directly with rheumatologists. I also believe in high quality, standardized care based on the best medical evidence possible. With this in mind, I will direct my Minister of Health and Community Services to work with leading experts to ensure that our physicians and health care providers have a model of arthritis care which works for the residents of this province. This may include training those in our health care teams to provide community-based treatment and preventive medicines.

Thank you once again for your correspondence and for bringing this concern to my attention. I look forward to working with you to create a better life for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Sincerely,
Ches Crosbie
Leader
Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador