



## FEDERAL ELECTION 2019 TOOLKIT “MAKE ARTHRITIS AN ELECTION PRIORITY”

### TAKE ACTION

We actively champion the needs of Canadians affected by arthritis, capturing the attention of decision-makers at both the Federal and Provincial levels to drive positive policy change and increase awareness and understanding of arthritis in Canada.

The most important part of our advocacy is YOU. We can only be credible and effective advocates for people with arthritis through YOUR help in YOUR community.

Make your voice heard this election. Speak up and get involved to raise the profile of arthritis and the needs of the 6 million Canadians (1 in 5 adults) living with arthritis. This toolkit provides an overview of the Arthritis Society’s key policy recommendations and how you can help make arthritis an election priority!

**Important information:** This election toolkit is non-partisan — we do not endorse or oppose any party or individual candidate. This toolkit is designed to help you interact with candidates of all parties to raise awareness of the impact of arthritis and our priority recommendations. Please share this toolkit with your friends, family, colleagues, and community — the success of our advocacy campaign depends on having many collective voices.

### THE ISSUES

Canada’s general election will take place on **Monday October 21, 2019**. The Arthritis Society is calling on all parties and candidates to support our policy recommendations that, if implemented, will help improve health outcomes and quality of life for people living with arthritis.

### OUR KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Ensure all Canadians have affordable access to the medicines they need**
- **Stop taxing medical cannabis and make it available through pharmacies**
- **Help reduce joint replacement wait times by increasing the Canada Health Transfer**

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

Here some simple actions you can take to make candidates aware of our policy recommendations:

1. **Email the political party leaders and/or your local political candidates, send letters to editor of local papers**

Visit [www.arthritis.ca/FedVote2019](http://www.arthritis.ca/FedVote2019) to take action by sending a letter to party leaders asking their position on our key recommendations. Don’t forget to add your own personal message on why it matters to you. Share your action with your networks and encourage them to send a letter too. There is also a template letter to the editor that you can personalize and submit to your local newspapers.

Send a personal message to your local candidates about our issues. To find your local candidates, visit <https://www.elections.ca/homeGE.aspx> and look up your electoral district.

Be sure to keep us informed of the great work you are doing by copying us on your messages by including [advocacy@arthritis.ca](mailto:advocacy@arthritis.ca) in the email address line!

2. **Arthritis Facts and Figures**

You can find useful arthritis stats to use in your local advocacy efforts at [arthritis.ca/facts](http://arthritis.ca/facts)



### 3. Post on social media

Share your interest and concerns with your social media networks! Share social media messages with us on Twitter [@ArthritisSoc](#) and/or Facebook [/ArthritisSociety](#).

Here are some suggested messages, hashtags and handles for you to post, retweet or make your own:

*Wait times for surgery are only getting longer. Yet most joint replacements are for #arthritis, affecting 1 in 5 adults. The next fed govt needs to help provinces reduce wait times so people don't have unnecessary pain. Take action: <https://bit.ly/2maQ3EG> #CanadaVotes #elxn43*

*Canadians should never have to choose between paying for prescription drugs and putting food on the table. We need a #pharmacare program that addresses urgent patient needs and removes barriers to access. Take action: <https://bit.ly/2maQ3EG> #CanadaVotes #elxn4*

*Medical cannabis is medicine – the next fed govt should treat it that way. Stop taxing medication and let people get it through their pharmacist! Have your voice heard: <https://bit.ly/2maQ3EG> #donttaxmedicine #CanadaVotes #elxn43*

To include graphics in your social messages, visit [arthritis.ca/fedvote2019-social](http://arthritis.ca/fedvote2019-social).

Remember to mention or tag federal and local candidates when advocating on social media:

Twitter: [@ElizabethMay](#) / Facebook: [ElizabethMayGreenLeader/](#)

Twitter: [@AndrewScheer](#) / Facebook: [AndrewScheerMP/](#)

Twitter: [@theJagmeetSingh](#) / Facebook: [jagmeetndp/](#)

Twitter: [@JustinTrudeau](#) / Facebook: [JustinPJTrudeau/](#)

Twitter: [@yfblanchet](#) / Facebook: [/yfblanchet/](#)

Twitter: [@MaximeBernier](#) / Facebook: [/hon.maximebernier](#)

### 4. Get answers - attend local candidates' debates or community events

We're encouraging people impacted by arthritis and these issues to attend debates of local candidates and ask them to share their position on our key recommendations. We have included our policy recommendations in more detail at the end of this kit for you to print and leave at events or with candidates.

Questions to ask Candidates:

*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?*

*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?*

*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?*

### 5. Become a volunteer

Passionate about arthritis issues and want to do more? Get in touch with us to become an advocacy volunteer at [arthritis.ca/volunteer](http://arthritis.ca/volunteer)

**Questions:** Please feel free to contact us directly! Email Kelly Gorman [kgorman@arthritis.ca](mailto:kgorman@arthritis.ca) or Joanne Di Nardo [jdinardo@arthritis.ca](mailto:jdinardo@arthritis.ca) or call 416-979-7228 x3383.



## ARTHRITIS SOCIETY 2019 Election Policy Recommendations and Questions

### **Ensure all Canadians have affordable access to the medicines they need**

Due to differences in coverage between provinces, and between public and private drug plans, Canadians do not all have the same level of access to the medications they need.

We need a national pharmacare program that ensures all Canadians have equitable access to a broad range of medically necessary treatments at an affordable price, wherever they live in Canada. In addition, we need that program to raise rather than lower the standards of access, because what works for one patient may not work for another, so a range of choice is critical.

Any effort to move forward on national pharmacare must be informed and advised by strong patient participation focused on addressing urgent patient needs.

***Question:** 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?*

### **Stop taxing medical cannabis and make it available through pharmacies**

Medical cannabis offers some arthritis patients an alternative for the management of pain and other symptoms. Unfortunately, the cost of using medical cannabis can put a financial strain on many patients, made worse by the application of sales and excise taxes. Medical cannabis should be exempt from taxation, just like all other prescription treatments under the Excise Tax Act.

Medical cannabis should be distributed through pharmacies, like other prescription medications. This will create a clear distinction between medical cannabis and cannabis for other uses. It will also help to ensure that patients receive reliable education from trained health care professionals on safe and effective use and facilitate reimbursement by health insurance plans.

***Question:** 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?*

### **Help reduce joint replacement wait times by increasing the Canada Health Transfer**

Arthritis is the leading cause of joint replacement, including over 99% of knee replacements and over 80% of hip replacements. Many provinces struggle to provide timely access to joint replacement surgery due to increased demand and lack of resources. In many regions, wait times are actually getting worse, resulting in unnecessary pain and suffering for too many Canadians.

By increasing the Canada Health Transfer to the level of health system demand growth – between 5 and 6 percent annually – the Federal government can help provinces meet the medically recommended 6-month target for knee and hip replacement surgeries.

***Question:** 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?*