

Gastrointestinal Society & Medicines Access Coalition BC

Re: All Candidates Question for the BC NDP

Dear Gail Attara, Members of the Gastrointestinal Society, and Members of Medicines Access Coalition BC,

Thanks for taking the time to write to us at the BC NDP. We appreciate the thoroughness of your letter, including the video links and access to the medication coverage report you released in January. BC is a great place to live. But, life continues to be tough for many people. British Columbians are feeling strained as global inflation, rising interest rates, and corporate gouging increase the costs of everyday life. People with ongoing health issues know that treatment doesn't just impact our individual bodies; it can also impact our household budgets. More than that, medical care that improves and saves the lives of people is a collective responsibility and worth the investment.

Like you, the BC NDP knows that healthcare is an equity issue. When we formed government in 2017, one of our first priorities was to get rid of MSP fees, knowing that they put an uneven burden on people receiving ongoing treatments. Post-pandemic, we focused on training, attracting, and retaining health professionals and developing new hospitals and medical schools. After all, everyone receives better care when we make life sustainable for healthcare workers. It's starting to make a difference – for example, more than 400,000 people now have a doctor that didn't have one before.

John Rustad's Conservatives plan to cut billions from the healthcare budget, privatize healthcare services, and invest in corporate profits instead of people. This would hurt us all, but people with conditions that require frequent or ongoing treatment would be especially hard hit.

The BC NDP is committed to delivering a health care system that is there when you need it. You can expect to see expanded access to services and medications highlighted in our platform over the coming month. We know there is much more work to do and, if elected, we hope to collaborate with you to strengthen healthcare in BC.

Question: Will you commit to increasing public funding of new, life-changing medicines in BC so life here can be equitable to all other provinces in Canada?

Answer: Yes. We believe that equitable access to services and medication is a core part of high-quality healthcare. We will also work to ensure the PharmaCare Special Authority program is more responsive to the urgent needs of British Columbians. Please take some time to go through our platform when it is released.

Rustad's plans to hand our healthcare system over to private interests would be devastating to British Columbians. It's a risk we can't afford.

Thanks again for reaching out to us, and for the important work that you do.