



# Election Questions

## Questions to ask political candidates

Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada (BTFC) is committed to supporting patients and families affected by a brain tumour through advocacy, research, information, support, and education. Over the past year, our advocacy efforts focused on several priority areas, including improving access to brain tumour drugs and treatment and ensuring financial support for brain tumour research and innovation.

During election campaign season, we invite you to engage with candidates about issues of importance to you, your family, and the brain tumour community. You may find opportunities to speak with candidates in door-to-door candidacy campaigns, community gatherings, regional debates, and town hall meetings. You may also choose to write or email the candidates in your area to share your concerns.

**Below is a list of key information on topics that matter to the brain tumour community, followed by suggested questions to help guide your conversations with political candidates.**

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## Improving access to brain tumour drugs and treatment

Access to brain tumour drugs and treatment remains inconsistent across Canada. Patients may or may not have access to their medications depending on factors such as provincial health-care priorities, drug shortage and discontinuation policies, and personal financial circumstances. In a recent BTFC survey, the brain tumour community ranked “government funding for Take Home Cancer Drugs” as the issue of top priority. Ensuring **equitable access to Take Home Cancer Drugs** allows patients across Canada to manage their medication needs from home, removing out-of-pocket cost burdens and treatment delays.

**Funding new drugs and health technologies that are out of financial reach** for Canadians is critical, especially for brain tumour patients who are often left with few treatment options. Canadians with public drug plan coverage wait an average of 22 months from Health Canada approval to patient access. Brain tumour patients cannot afford this delay. Collaboration between governments, industry, health-care professionals and other key stakeholders is necessary to improve the drug pricing and reimbursement process and ensure timely access to new medicines for Canadians.<sup>1</sup>

### Questions

- What is your commitment to funding Take Home Cancer Drugs (THCDs) to ensure Canadian patients have uninterrupted access to life-saving drugs and treatments?
- How do you plan to improve the drug pricing and reimbursement process to help expedite patient access to newly approved medications and health technologies that may be out of financial reach?

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<sup>1</sup> Innovative Medicines Canada. (2025). Advocacy. <https://innovativemedicines.ca/advocacy/>



## Financial support for research and innovation

The advancement of biomedical manufacturing in Canada will depend on provincial and federal funding to ensure adequate protection of the health of Canadians, including those with a brain tumour diagnosis. The Canadian Critical Drug Initiative (CCDI) was launched with the aim of bringing new drug discoveries to patients and preventing future shortages by producing a domestic supply.<sup>2</sup> These initiatives are instrumental in **building the Canadian capacity to produce many life-extending drugs** to limit the impact of drug shortages and discontinuations and ensure uninterrupted access to medications.

While the brain tumour research community continues to make progress and is dedicated to advocating for issues of priority, funding is desperately needed to **support the development and implementation of innovative diagnostic tools and individualized treatment options** that help limit negative impacts on quality of life. Canada spends only 1.5% of total public expenditures on health to fund health research, and researchers are struggling to find funding for health research projects that can lead to innovative health solutions.<sup>3</sup>

### Question

- How will you ensure that brain tumour drugs and treatments are considered in discussions with the drug development and manufacturing sectors?
- How will you support the implementation of innovative new diagnostics, treatments, and health technologies in partnership with all levels of government across Canada?
- How does your party plan to increase health research funding in Canada to support our dedicated and passionate research community?

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<sup>2</sup> Rutherford, G. (2023). Drug manufacturing facility gets green light thanks to federal dollars. University of Alberta. <https://www.ualberta.ca/en/folio/2023/03/drug-manufacturing-facility-gets-green-light-thanks-to-federal-dollars.html>

<sup>3</sup> Research Canada. (2021). Research Canada's 2021 Campaign Kit. <http://yourcandidatesyourhealth.ca/resources-for-advocates/toolkit/>



## Sustainable support for brain tumour health-care professionals

Treatment and care for brain tumours require extensive specialization and training of health-care professionals and academic experts. Decades of underfunding for post-secondary education have led to cutbacks that severely impact research at a time when there is a growing need. Nine out of 10 Canadians consider it important that federal and provincial governments invest in the education and training of health and medical researchers.<sup>4</sup> Canadian patients require a commitment from government leaders to expand and sustain the health-care and innovation workforce.

### Question

- How will you prioritize funding of specialized education and training of experts in Canada to ensure they can advance research and provide the highest-quality care for brain tumour patients?

## Pharmacare

Currently, Canada's public health-care system does not include prescription drug coverage. Three-quarters of Canadians support the implementation of a National Pharmacare program, and more than 3/4 support expanding coverage to include other categories of prescription drugs, including cancer medications and drugs for rare diseases.<sup>5</sup>

Canadian patient advocates highlight the importance of inclusivity and shared decision-making in drug policy processes, noting that patient organizations "try their best to share patient perspectives across different organizations in the pharmaceutical system, like Health Canada, pharmaceutical companies, the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board, the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance (pCPA) and provincial and territorial ministries of health, repeating the same views across a seemingly uncoordinated system."<sup>6</sup>

### Question

- How does your party support investments into the Pharmacare initiative, including expanded drug coverage and adherence to inclusive patient engagement processes that are critical to informed decision-making?

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<sup>4</sup> Research Canada. (2021). Research Canada's 2021 Campaign Kit.

<http://yourcandidatesyourhealth.ca/resources-for-advocates/toolkit/>

<sup>5</sup> Canadian Health Coalition. (2024). Attitudes Towards Health Care Summary Report.

<https://www.healthcoalition.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Environics-x-Canadian-Health-Coalition-Healthcare-Poll-Topline-Report-June-11-24-1.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Proulx, L. 2024. Where are the patient voices in Canada's pharmaceutical system?

<https://healthydebate.ca/2024/10/topic/patient-voices-canadas-pharmaceutical-system/>

## Long-term care

Many aspects of the Canadian health-care system are tailored to acute care, while patients requiring ongoing support struggle to find appropriate long-term care services to help maintain their quality of life. Patients deserve dignity and choice in their health care, and most Canadians support their government making a significant investment in building more public long-term care and assisted living facilities.<sup>7</sup>

### Question

- What are your priorities for investing in public long-term care, including hiring adequate health-care staff to ensure patients do not go without necessary support?

## State of Canada's health-care system

Seven out of 10 Canadians report that the health-care system in their province is in a **state of crisis**. While 8/10 would consider the **shortage of health-care workers a 'major concern,'** over half believe their provincial government is not doing enough to address the shortage.<sup>8</sup> Research Canada outlines that there is a "critical need—and demand—for **robust health data that can accurately inform decision-making,** enhance threat surveillance, educate the public and help health leaders gain the upper hand in a crisis. It has also demonstrated the need for digital health tools that can engage patients more fully in their care, improve access to quality health care and innovations for patients, and facilitate innovative ways of conducting health research."<sup>9</sup>

### Question

- What is your party doing to address these critical health-care concerns? (Timely access to appropriate care, acquisition and retention of health-care workers, robust health data collection to inform decision-making.)

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<sup>7</sup> Canadian Health Coalition. (2024). Attitudes Towards Health Care Summary Report.

<https://www.healthcoalition.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Environics-x-Canadian-Health-Coalition-Healthcare-Poll-Topline-Report-June-11-24-1.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Canadian Health Coalition. (2024). Attitudes Towards Health Care Summary Report.

<https://www.healthcoalition.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Environics-x-Canadian-Health-Coalition-Healthcare-Poll-Topline-Report-June-11-24-1.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Research Canada. (2021). Research Canada's 2021 Campaign Kit.

<http://yourcandidatesyourhealth.ca/resources-for-advocates/toolkit/>

## Support for the health charities sector

Health charities are critical service providers to some of Canada's most vulnerable populations and represent a vital source of funding for health and clinical research; however, reduced philanthropic donations as a result of the economic challenges presented by COVID-19 severely reduced health charities' capacity to carry out these fundamental activities and continue to threaten the long-term health of this sector.<sup>10</sup>

Health charities require **commitment and financial support from government representatives** in order to continue their critical missions of supporting Canadian patients and families while navigating uncertain market, political and health-care system conditions.

### Question

- How does your party plan to support and fund the health charities sector in Canada to ensure they are able to carry out their critical missions of supporting Canadian patients and families?

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<sup>10</sup> Research Canada. (2021). Research Canada's 2021 Campaign Kit.  
<http://yourcandidatesyourhealth.ca/resources-for-advocates/toolkit/>

