



BC Election campaign, April 11 – May 9, 2017

British Columbia Can Do Better!

British Columbians now have access to Duodopa therapy through BC PharmaCare; but several key issues remain including: reducing waitlists to access movement disorder clinics and treatments; increasing the availability of Parkinson's-specific specialists; and better educating healthcare professionals about Parkinson's disease. Join us in advocating for improved patient outcomes with our [Four Point Plan](#).

Questions for Candidates

Thank them, or their party if they are a new candidate, for their support in gaining access to Duodopa therapy.

Background:

- After months of effort, Parkinson Society British Columbia (PSBC) and a group of BC Advocacy Ambassadors obtained support from various parties' MLAs who helped advocate for funding of this therapy for a select group of advanced Parkinson's patients.
- Funding was announced February 14th, 2017 at an estimated cost of \$60,000 per year, per patient.

1. Will they support increasing access to the only other therapy, Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS), for people with advanced Parkinson's disease (PD)?

Background:

- Currently, eligible patients may wait over three years to access DBS.
- Since Parkinson's is progressive, patients identified for the treatment may no longer meet the criteria once the three year wait has passed.
- Life is unbearable for these three years in waiting. Patients are condemned to alternating bouts of writhing, called dyskinesia; or they are frozen in a state where little or no movement occurs, including lacking the ability to speak, having difficulty swallowing and experiencing trouble breathing.
- DBS surgery costs ~\$20,000, and battery replacement every 4 years is another \$15,000.



2. What is their position on increasing clinical resources for Parkinson's disease to reduce waitlist times?

Background:

- Although PD is a complex disease, it is treatable if the right care can be accessed.
- If left untreated or incorrectly treated, care of people with Parkinson's disease can be more costly with unnecessary or lengthier hospitalizations and longer periods of rehabilitation
- A patient may wait up to three years to see a neurologist who specializes in PD.
- If a patient resides outside of Vancouver/Surrey, no specialists are available in larger communities other than a half-day once per week clinic in Kelowna. There are no specialists in major cities including Victoria.

3. What is their position on providing funding to train allied healthcare professionals in the management of Parkinson's disease?

Background:

- Physiotherapy, speech-language therapy and occupational therapy all help in the management of Parkinson's symptoms. Specific training techniques are required for best results as per the Canadian Clinical Practice Guidelines on Parkinson's disease.
- Voice and swallowing are compromised in Parkinson's disease. Few speech therapists are available, and those that are, often do not have the expertise to best assist a person with Parkinson's. Choking is a major issue in the advanced stages.

4. What is their position on changing hospital policy and training staff to allow for people with Parkinson's to take medications on a personalized schedule? This will reduce complications during hospital stays.

Background:

- Sometimes people with PD are hospitalized for issues unrelated to the disease, such as hip or knee surgery.
- People with PD are often on a very complex regimen of medication.
- It is important that people with PD receive their medication on time, or their symptoms may become uncontrollable and their health will be compromised. If medication is not taken on time, they may not recover after hospitalization.

Election Day is May 9 – Make sure your voice is heard!

For more information on how to get involved in our advocacy initiatives, visit:

www.parkinson.bc.ca/advocacy