

Provincial Election Toolkit



BC's Naturopathic Doctors

BCND www.bcnd.ca

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2024 Provincial Election

On October 19th, 2024, British Columbians will vote for a new provincial government. Since 2017 this province has been governed by the New Democratic Party (NDP) first under then Premier John Horgan and now under Premier David Eby. While there are many parties across the province, the political parties that are running and expected to gain seats in the Legislature are the NDP, the Conservative Party of BC and the BC Greens. Until a few short weeks ago, the BC United (formerly BC Liberal) Party was also planning to run. However, BC’s election landscape changed dramatically when Kevin Falcon, the leader of the BC United Party, announced he was suspending the BC United Party’s election campaign, withdrawing candidates and throwing his support to the BC Conservative Party¹. Given it is an active time in the political landscape, we encourage all NDs to research, review party platforms and make informed decisions. There is not yet a clear picture on how this will impact the political landscape in the long-term and of course we have no idea how this might impact the outcome of the election. But one thing is for sure, every vote counts!

This toolkit is meant to provide clarity and context for BCND members about the election. It contains functional information such as ‘who the candidates are’ and more detailed information and templates about how to make your voice heard in the upcoming election.

At BCND we know that our profession has been vocal about significant concerns with the (not yet enacted) Health Professions & Occupations Act. There is no better time than during an election to ensure that your Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) hears from you about those, and other, concerns you may have.

Are you registered to vote?

Canadian citizens 18 years or older who have been residents of BC for at least six months are eligible to vote in the 2024 provincial election.

The Elections BC website has a wealth of information and details very clearly how you can go about registering to vote. The process takes only a few minutes and can be completed online.

[Learn more.](#)

[Other voting information from Elections BC.](#)



Important Dates

September 21	Writ Drop- Campaign Officially Begins
September 28	Last Day for Candidate Nominations
October 7	Online & Telephone Voter Registration Closes
October 13	Last Day to Request a Vote By Mail Package
October 10-13, 15-16	Advance Voting
October 19	Day of Election
October 26-28	Final Count
November 5	Return Day

Your Electoral District

Elections BC makes it easy to find your district. [Go here](#), and input your address to find which electoral district you live in.

¹ Note, the BC United remains a registered political party until they are officially accepted into running for the new “coalition”.

Where to Vote

Voting in the 2024 Provincial Election takes place either via Advance Voting or on Election Day at designated locations within your electoral district or “riding.”

Advance voting will be available October 10-13 and October 15-16 (but closed on the 14th which is Thanksgiving). Advance voting polls are open from 8am-8pm.

[Learn more about Advance Voting.](#)

Final voting, or voting on the day of the provincial election, will occur on October 19th, with voting stations open from 8am-8pm. [Learn more about election day voting locations.](#)

Candidates

At the time of writing, candidate lists are not yet finalized and won't be until the September 28th deadline for filing a nomination. The Elections BC website keeps this information up to date and you can find the [list of candidates here](#). You might want to check back once the deadline has passed to see the final list.

Major Party Websites

BC Greens

<https://bcgreens2024.ca/>

The BC Greens 2024 Election Platform is found on their website (noted above).

BC New Democratic Party

<https://www.bcndp.ca/>

The BC NDP 2024 Election Platform is found on their website (noted above).

Conservative Party of BC

<https://www.conservativebc.ca/>

The Conservative Party of BC 2024 Election Platform is found on their website (noted above).

[Full list of current registered political parties.](#)

Polls

While there are many polls that can be easily found by doing a quick Google search, 338 Canada is regarded as a balanced, non-partisan, source. This website is a model of projections based on polls, electoral history, and other data.

[Check it out.](#)

Advocacy Tips

Key Messages. A key message is a great way to deliver a consistent set of short messages that speak to the issues that matter most to you. A good key message is short and not open for misinterpretation. If there are specific issues related to a topic you want political and healthcare leaders to hear, write a series of key messages and ask yourself if you were to have ten seconds with that person, would they be clear about your issue. Pick one or two issues that matter to you or impact your work as a naturopathic doctor. A well-defined message is not only clear and concise, it defines the issues on your terms and in your words. Your message will be much more meaningful if you express it from your position – whether you are for or against an issue, your emotion is fair to express.



Getting the Attention of Policy Makers. It's challenging to know how to be included and invited to share your opinion with those who can best affect change. Nevertheless, there are certainly ways to become involved, and become the type of person whose presence and opinion is valued. During an election, political leaders hear from a lot of people. Some come with concerns about injustices or problems, others come forward with solutions and suggestions that are well thought out and considered. No question, most of us would rather listen to the individual who comes with a plan and ideas. You have every right to connect with political leaders. They have offices, office staff, social media accounts etc. Make a point of talking to them. Don't consume their time. Be clear and to the point – share your well-thought-out ideas and opinions and move on. Plan your questions and key messages, introduce yourself, pass them your (virtual) card and engage in a short conversation with them.

Asking Relevant Questions. We have some suggestions to help you ask relevant and important questions.

- a) Think about the health policy issues that are affecting your work, your well-being and ask the sort of questions you feel health and political leaders should be answering.
- b) Split the questions up among colleagues - only one question per person.
- c) Keep your question short and succinct. Stay away from questions that can be 'yes or no' answers, but don't ask complicated, compound questions.
- d) Focus on asking open questions like "What do you think about...?" or "How do you feel about...?" Or "How would you handle this process?" or "How would you implement the steps you discussed?"

A Word About Petitions. In the era of online petitions and GoFundMe accounts it's easy to focus on using these avenues to make a point or to ask for change. The reality, however, is that rarely, if ever, things change because people have signed a petition. That is not to say they always fail, but politicians may be inclined to take up a petitioned cause only if it's easy and something they might agree with anyway. For example, online petitioners claimed their petition led to the banning of plastic bags in Victoria, BC. The truth is though this was well underway and an 'easy' win, meaning that the petition was not the reason for the change. If you love petitions, please go ahead and use them but there are other more constructive ways to ensure that your important issues become part of the public dialogue. And there are times that petitions can damage your cause, because they create a sense of 'ganging up' against an individual rather than advocating in favour of a position.

Using Social Media Platforms. Most organizations, political leaders, healthcare leaders and people in general are using at least one social media platform, and most of us use multiple platforms. Follow these leaders and organizations. Check out what they say. Respond (politely), post, share it, or like it. Or, use it as a space to ask that person questions. Respond to them using some of the tips above with respect to key messages. Ask them focused questions and engage them.

Keep in mind though that for many people social media is a tool to 'needle' or criticize in large part because you get to be anonymous and hide behind a computer. Don't fall for this idea that all social media interactions should be contentious or fraught to be effective. Social media is a powerful tool that is about engagement, a way to make connections and build bridges and as opposed to tearing them down. Don't shy away but be constructive.

Understand Partisan, Non-Partisan, Bi-Partisan and understand when NOT to be partisan: BCND is a non-partisan organization. Non-partisan is defined as 'objective' or not being controlled or unduly influenced by a political party or special interest group. In other words, we have no bias towards any political party and do not endorse or support one political party over another. Instead, we are interested in talking to and hearing all perspectives on issues that impact the profession and working towards a solutions-oriented approach.

On the flip side, sometimes organizations (or individuals) are partisan, which is defined as something that is partial to a particular person, party or outcome. There's nothing wrong with this, and many NDs have very good reason to be partisan, perhaps they tend to have conservative or liberal views or feel particularly strongly about one party or another. BCND welcomes the involvement of NDs who have a partisan viewpoint, but just note that we won't publish or support anything overly partisan. To represent the profession effectively in the province, we need to be able to work with governments across the political spectrum and to maintain constructive relationships with decision makers.

Ironically, the third term, bi-partisan, is probably the most problematic, and maybe most frequently used term of the three. Technically, bi-partisan is defined as 'composed of members from both parties'.

As a non-partisan organization, BCND welcomes all NDs to bring issues to the forefront, particularly during times of public health crisis. However, these issues should stand on their own and not be directly associated with a particular party or their position. Taking them into one political camp or another can potentially harm the profession’s capacity for influence as a shaper of public and health policy. If you as an individual wish to take a position on anything a political leader or party shares or notes during a crisis such as this, ask yourself if your politics will help or hurt the situation? It’s ok to be critical of the decisions or actions of political leaders, but it is unprofessional and never acceptable to attack them personally and doing so reflects badly not just on the individual but the entire profession. You should however express your outrage on behalf of populations not being well served by current policies but be sure you come to the table with a solution for the issue about which you are being critical.

Engagement Opportunities

Getting involved is empowering. By taking the time to help candidates understand key issues, you can have a lasting impact on the health and well-being of all British Columbians. When candidates see large numbers of people voicing the same concerns and desires, they pay attention. Below are some ideas for how you might use this opportunity to make sure NDs voices are heard loud and clear by all candidates.



Please note, if you’d like BCND to support you with preparing for a meeting, reach out to us at bcnd@bcnd.ca and we’re happy to discuss.

Public Zoom/Online Meeting Sessions

There’s nothing like personal interaction to help start a dialogue with candidates and bring a human face to the issues that are important to BC NDs. Meetings that are open to the public usually have reporters in attendance and may even be televised. This makes them great opportunities to get your points across, find out what the candidates are really thinking about, and share your ND perspective with the media and the public. Here are a few handy tips to consider before you head to a public (or online) meeting:

- **Invite your colleagues:** Make it a team effort - post public meeting information in group chats, text or in your clinics. Remind your fellow NDs of how important it is that the next government understands that naturopathic doctors are an important part of the healthcare discussion and can bring unlimited solutions to policy discussions.
- **Prepare questions:** Prepare some questions to ask candidates at the meeting. And don’t forget to divvy up the questions so each of your colleagues can ask one - chances are good the moderator of the session won’t let any attendees ask more than one.
- **Question preamble:** When asking a question, first take a moment to thank or acknowledge the candidates, introduce yourself as an ND, and then ask your question.
- **Follow-up:** Follow up once the meeting is over. E-mail the candidates and thank them for their participation. Remind them of any questions that were discussed and offer to send them additional material or information.

Social Media

Nowadays, most candidates use social media to get the word out about their platforms, ideas and appearances. Whether you are an avid user of social media, check your Facebook page occasionally, or plug your ears whenever you hear the term X or ‘Insta’, these platforms can be a critical source of information and discussion.

Here are some social media tips to help you embrace the digital space:

- 1) The main political parties have social media accounts and so do the party leaders. Follow them and use this medium to ‘hear’ from those candidates and parties. You’d be surprised how much information about a political platform can be shared in very few characters! Keep in mind that local MLAs may also be online. Check the website of your local candidate to see which social media platforms they use.
- 2) If you’re on social media already and have utilized # (hashtags - or a type of filing system) search for and use #bcpoli or #BCElection & #BCElection2024. These #’s are already in use and you can see all posts with this tag by doing a quick search.

Ask for a Meeting

Candidates love to meet with constituents during elections and will want to hear from you about the issues that matter to you in your region. Seek out your MLA and MLA candidates and request a meeting, ask to talk to them about the issues impacting your profession.

Remember, if you'd like BCND to support you with preparing for a meeting, reach out to us at bcnd@bcnd.ca and we're happy to discuss.



Write Letters or Email

Take the time to contact the campaign offices of the politicians you're interested in and write personalized letters that outline your points of view. Be clear and concise (see above sections for tips on key messages) and avoid 'over-issuing' your letter. Pick one or two issues that really matter and outline your argument in a clear and factual way.

Engage with Advocacy Groups

There are many advocacy organizations that work to influence politicians on specific issues. By partnering with groups who share your values, you can amplify your voice.

Connect with Media Outlets

Write op-eds or letters to the editor in local newspapers to publicly share your views. Politicians often pay attention to media coverage in their districts and op-eds are a great way to highlight a point of view.

Key Tips for Writing Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor

- **Stay Concise:** Most op-eds are between 500-700 words, while letters to the editor are shorter (around 150-250 words). Stick to one or two key points.
- **Be Timely:** Tie your piece to a recent news event, policy debate, or election issue to make it relevant.
- **Back Your Argument with Facts:** Use data or real-world examples to support your claims.
- **Use a Clear Call to Action:** State what you believe should happen or what the public or politicians should support.
- **Maintain a Professional and Respectful Tone:** Even when disagreeing with policies or politicians, keep your tone respectful and constructive.

Sample Op-Ed

Title: It's Time to Fully Integrate Naturopathic Medicine into BC's Healthcare System

By Dr. [Your Full Name]

As a naturopathic doctor practicing in [Your City], I see firsthand the challenges patients face in accessing comprehensive healthcare. Our healthcare system is under immense pressure, with long wait times, limited access to primary care, and a rising demand for preventive and integrative approaches. With a provincial election on the horizon, now is the time to talk about how naturopathic medicine can play a crucial role in easing these burdens.

Naturopathic doctors (NDs) are extensively trained in both conventional and natural medicine, offering safe, effective, and holistic care to patients. However, barriers within the current system prevent us from fully contributing to British Columbia's healthcare landscape. Expanding the scope of practice for NDs would allow us to provide a broader range of services—like prescribing medications and ordering diagnostic tests—that would help reduce the strain on general practitioners and emergency rooms.

Many British Columbians are already seeking out alternative forms of care, but limitations on our practice create unnecessary bottlenecks in the system. When patients cannot access preventive care or holistic treatments, they often end up in overcrowded clinics or ERs, contributing to the very healthcare crisis we are all trying to solve.

There are over 800 naturopathic doctors practicing in B.C. Formal recognition of these naturopathic doctors as primary care providers would not only help meet demand but also improve patient outcomes. Imagine a system where patients have more options, shorter wait times, and personalized healthcare that emphasizes prevention.

With healthcare as a key election issue, I urge both candidates and voters to consider the benefits of fully integrating naturopathic medicine into the public healthcare framework. This is a practical, cost-effective solution that would lead to better health outcomes for all British Columbians.

Dr. [Your Full Name]

Naturopathic Doctor

[Your Clinic/Practice Name]

[Your City/Region]

Sample Letter to the Editor

Subject: Expanding Naturopathic Medicine for Better Healthcare in BC

Dear Editor,

I am writing as a naturopathic doctor in [Your City] to highlight an issue that should be at the forefront of healthcare discussions this election season: the role of naturopathic medicine in improving patient care. Naturopathic doctors (NDs) are trained to deliver safe, effective healthcare that can help reduce the load on BC's overburdened healthcare system.

There are over 800 naturopathic doctors practicing in B.C. Expanding the scope of practice for NDs—such as allowing us to prescribe certain medications or order tests—would provide patients with more accessible healthcare options. Formal recognition of NDs as primary care providers and integration of their practice into the system would go a long way to ease the pressure on emergency rooms and clinics, while also meeting the public demand for more holistic, preventive care.

It's time to fully integrate naturopathic medicine into BC's healthcare system, benefiting both patients and providers.

Sincerely,

Dr. [Your Full Name]

Naturopathic Doctor

[Your City/Region]

Submission Process:

- Follow submission guidelines: Check your local newspaper's website for submission rules, word count limits, and formatting requirements.
- Include your credentials: Mention your title (e.g., naturopathic doctor) and any relevant affiliations.
- Stay timely: Submit your letter or op-ed when the topic is most relevant (e.g., during the election or after healthcare news).

Templates**Meeting Request****Sample 1**

Dear [MLA's or MLA Candidate's Name],

I hope this message finds you well. My name is [Your Name], and I am a constituent from [Your City/Region]. As [Your Profession, e.g., a naturopathic doctor], I am deeply invested in the well-being of our community and the quality of healthcare services available to residents.

With the upcoming election, I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss some important issues affecting our profession and the broader healthcare landscape in British Columbia. I believe that by working together, we can address key challenges and enhance healthcare outcomes for our constituents.

Please let me know a convenient time for you to meet, either virtually or in person, at your earliest availability. I look forward to the chance to speak with you.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

**Sample 2**

Subject: Important Issues Affecting [Your Profession] – Request for Your Support

Dear [Candidate's Name],

I hope this message finds you well. My name is [Your Name], and I live in [Your City/Region]. As a [Your Profession, e.g., naturopathic doctor], I am writing to share my concerns about a few critical issues impacting both my profession and the overall healthcare system in our community.

I understand that your platform is focused on improving healthcare services, and I would like to bring attention to the following key points:

[Issue 1: e.g., Expansion of Naturopathic Services in BC]

Naturopathic doctors play a vital role in delivering primary healthcare, yet there are significant barriers to expanding our scope of practice. Enhancing access to naturopathic services could reduce the burden on the public system, improve patient outcomes, and offer more options to those seeking integrative care.

[Issue 2: e.g., Recognition of Naturopathic Doctors as Primary Care Providers]

With the healthcare system under strain, fully recognizing and integrating NDs as primary care providers would alleviate pressure on emergency rooms and general practitioners. This would also address patient demand for alternative and preventive care approaches.

I urge you to consider these issues as you move forward with your campaign and, if elected, to advocate for policies that support the broader inclusion of naturopathic medicine in our healthcare system.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these points in more detail and look forward to hearing your views on these matters. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or would like to arrange a meeting.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

[Your Professional Title/Organization, if applicable]

Advocacy Letter

Subject: Advocating for Enhanced Support for Naturopathic Medicine in BC

Dear [Candidate's Name],

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Dr. [Your Full Name], and I am a licensed naturopathic doctor practicing in [Your City/Region]. As a healthcare professional dedicated to improving patient outcomes and supporting the broader healthcare system in British Columbia, I am reaching out to advocate for greater recognition and support for naturopathic medicine within our province.

As you know, the healthcare system is under increasing strain, with long wait times, limited access to primary care, and growing demand for preventive and integrative healthcare approaches. Naturopathic doctors (NDs) are well-positioned to help address these challenges, and I would like to bring to your attention two key areas where I believe policy changes could make a meaningful impact:

Enhancing the Scope of Practice for Naturopathic Doctors

NDs are highly trained primary healthcare providers with expertise in both conventional and natural medicine. However, limitations on our scope of practice prevent us from fully contributing to the healthcare system. Expanding our scope would allow NDs to provide a wider range of services—such as prescribing necessary medications, ordering diagnostic tests, and delivering more comprehensive care—thereby reducing the burden on overextended GPs and emergency rooms.

Recognizing Naturopathic Doctors as Primary Care Providers

By formally recognizing and integrating NDs as primary care providers, the government can increase patient access to preventive and holistic care. This would align with the growing demand from British Columbians for more diverse healthcare options and help alleviate the pressure on our traditional medical system, which is struggling to meet demand.

I am hopeful that, with your leadership, we can explore policies that better integrate naturopathic medicine into BC's healthcare framework. This would provide patients with greater choice and contribute to a more sustainable and accessible healthcare system.

I would be grateful for the opportunity to discuss these issues further, and I invite you to reach out if you are open to a meeting or a conversation about how naturopathic medicine can help support the healthcare needs of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. [Your Full Name]

Naturopathic Doctor

[Your Clinic/Practice Name]

[Your Contact Information]

[Your City/Region]

Sample Questions for Candidates

Please note, these are just samples of questions that could be asked.

HPOA

- 1) What is your understanding of the Health Professions and Occupations Act and its implications for healthcare professionals in our province?
- 2) How will you ensure that the HPOA promotes equitable access to healthcare for patients, while also supporting the professional needs of healthcare providers, including naturopathic doctors (NDs)?



- 3) If elected, how would you engage with healthcare professionals to ensure that the HPOA is effectively implemented and amended if needed?
- 4) What are your thoughts on the current scope of practice for naturopathic doctors under the HPOA, and do you see any potential for expanding their role in the healthcare system?
- 5) The HPOA is designed to regulate health professions and ensure accountability. How would you ensure that all health professionals, including alternative practitioners like NDs, are treated fairly under this act?
- 6) How will you ensure that the oversight and regulation of healthcare professionals through the HPOA remain transparent and effective without creating unnecessary barriers to practice?

Scope of Practice/Primary Care

- 1) How will you advocate for the integration of naturopathic medicine into primary care and ensure that NDs have an equal opportunity to contribute to healthcare delivery?
- 2) What specific measures would you take to ensure that naturopathic doctors are adequately supported and that their patients have access to the treatments they need?
- 3) What role do you think naturopathic medicine should play in addressing public health challenges like chronic disease, mental health, and preventative care?
- 4) What is your plan to address the shortage of primary care providers in our province, and how do you see naturopathic doctors contributing to this solution?
- 5) How would you improve access to primary care services, especially in rural and underserved areas, and what role can NDs play in expanding access?
- 6) Given the ongoing strain on the healthcare system, would you support allowing NDs to take on a greater role in primary care? If so, how?
- 7) How do you envision naturopathic doctors collaborating with other healthcare professionals in a team-based primary care model?
- 8) Would you support expanding the scope of practice for NDs to better integrate them into primary care? If yes, what areas of practice do you think could be expanded?
- 9) How would you work with professional bodies to ensure that naturopathic doctors can prescribe, diagnose, and provide care on par with other primary care providers?

Private healthcare providers

- 1) What is your position on the role of private healthcare services within our public healthcare system? Do you believe private care can complement public care, or do you see it as posing risks to the integrity of universal healthcare?
- 2) How would you support patient choice between private and public care while maintaining high standards of quality in both sectors?
- 3) How do you plan to balance access to private care options while ensuring that the public healthcare system remains robust and accessible to all?
- 4) Would you support public funding or insurance coverage for naturopathic care as part of the primary care system?
- 5) What are your thoughts on including naturopathic doctors as part of publicly funded primary care teams?
- 6) How would you work to ensure that patients have access to naturopathic care through public health insurance programs or employer benefit plans?

Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT)

- 1) How do you view the role of naturopathic doctors in expanding access to opioid agonist therapy (OAT) to address the opioid crisis in our province?
- 2) Would your government support legislative or regulatory changes that would allow qualified naturopathic doctors to prescribe opioid agonist therapies such as methadone and buprenorphine-naloxone (Suboxone)?

- 3) What steps would your government take to remove barriers to prescribing opioid agonist therapies, particularly in underserved or rural communities where NDs are often the primary healthcare providers?
- 4) Do you support increasing opportunities for NDs to receive specialized training in OAT prescribing, and how might your government facilitate interprofessional collaboration between NDs and other healthcare professionals in this area?
- 5) Would you consider allocating funding to include naturopathic doctors as part of the team of healthcare professionals involved in opioid addiction treatment programs, particularly in expanding their prescribing authority for OAT?
- 6) How would you integrate naturopathic doctors into your broader public health and harm reduction strategy for managing the opioid crisis?
- 7) Given that NDs often take a holistic approach to patient care, how would your government support the integration of naturopathic medicine in the overall care of patients requiring OAT, including mental health and social services?

Women's Health

- 1) As a naturopathic doctor, my patients often seek comprehensive care for issues such as hormonal imbalances during menopause. However, unlike primary care practitioners or gynecologists within the public system, I am restricted from ordering essential lab tests without incurring additional costs for my patients. This limits access to preventive and holistic care. How will your government address these disparities and ensure that all healthcare providers, including naturopaths, have the tools and resources to deliver integrated and cost-effective care for menopausal individuals?
- 2) Naturopathic doctors play a critical role in supporting patients through life transitions like menopause, offering complementary approaches to health and wellness. However, our inability to access publicly funded lab tests for patients often leads to fragmented care. Will your government take steps to create more inclusive policies that allow naturopathic doctors to access necessary diagnostic tools within the public health system, particularly for managing menopause and related health conditions?
- 3) With menopause being an important health milestone, patients often look for both conventional and naturopathic support to navigate this phase. Unfortunately, naturopathic doctors face challenges in providing a full spectrum of care due to restrictions on ordering lab tests without extra costs to patients. How do you plan to improve access to lab services for all healthcare providers, so that patients, especially those experiencing menopause, can benefit from a more integrated approach to their health?

BCND Elections Survey

We invite you to take about five minutes to participate in our short elections survey. Tell us what your key issues so that BCND can further focus our advocacy work after the election. [Take the survey.](#)