

LOCAL NEWS

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Waitlists continue to delay diagnosis and treatment of autism: Opposition **LATEST NEWS**

The Telegram

A private members motion that recently passed in the House of Assembly calling for improvements to autism services and programs in the province still hasn't generated results, Opposition Leader Yvonne Jones says. According to a news release, in May, all three parties in the House of Assembly unanimously supported a motion that called for progressive improvements to autism programs and services that would enhance the quality of life for those suffering from the condition.

Jones said that while government committed to taking action to address the situation, parents are still contacting the Opposition Office with stories of waitlists up to 10 months before their children can be seen by the appropriate medical professionals.

"We recently spoke to a parent of a four-year-old boy in the Codroy Valley who has been advised that there are 70 children on the waitlist ahead of his son," Jones said. "Staff at the Janeway could not provide an appointment for this child to be assessed for autism and was instead told that he would have to wait at least 7-10 months for his first appointment."

Jones said it is accepted in the medical community that early intervention and diagnosis of children with autism offers the best supports and development opportunities.

"Such long waiting periods negatively impacts access to early medical assistance and does little to provide children with timely and accessible care to deal with their unique situations," she said. "Autism is considered a very dynamic neurological disorder and with earlier and consistent intervention, there is often more improvement for the children."