

Jones slams government over cardiac lab service

By JAMES MCLEOD

THE TELEGRAM

Wait times for heart disease testing are unacceptable, and costing the province money, according to Liberal Leader Yvonne Jones.

In a news release Tuesday, Jones said people are waiting several weeks for tests from the cardiac catheterization (cath) lab at the Health Sciences Centre. Many of those patients, in danger of heart attacks, have to take up hospital beds while waiting for the dye test, which determines blockages in a

patient's veins and arteries.

"They waited in hospital for up to four weeks," Jones said.

"Once they got in, and got the dye test done, they had their problem resolved and they were home within 24 to 48 hours."

According to Jones, each day in hospital costs the province \$600 or more.

While there is no specific problem causing the delays in the lab, Jones said it's working at full capacity and is still playing catch up from summer vacations.

Eastern Health is currently posting

multimillion-dollar deficits and the province is cutting back lab and X-ray services in Flower's Cove and Lewisporte.

Jones says the cath lab in St. John's isn't another problem, it's an opportunity.

"What I'm saying to the government is, start looking at where we can save money by improving services and wait times, and not just by cutting services which is what's happening in Flower's Cove and Lewisporte."

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