

LOCAL NEWS

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Government's reversal on lab and X-ray cuts demonstrates ineffectiveness of Tory MHAs: opposition

LATEST NEWS 

The Telegram

Opposition Leader Yvonne Jones says government's decision to reinstate lab and X-ray services at Flower's Cove, plead ignorance and apologize for their mistake, sheds light on just how decisions are made within the Williams government. According to an opposition news release, earlier today, Health Minister Jerome Kennedy announced on an open line radio show that lab and X-ray services would be staying at the health facility in Flower's Cove. The release also states that Premier Danny Williams said in media interviews that his government made a mistake and he did not realize the impact that cutting the service would have on the region's population. A spokeswoman at the premier's office this afternoon confirmed that lab and X-ray services will stay in Flower's Cove. That's a reversal from an announcement at the end of the summer that government would be cutting lab and X-ray service in Lewisporte and Flower's Cove. Major protests by area residents followed. Earlier this month, former health minister Paul Oram —who had stated the decision on the cuts would not be reversed—resigned as minister and from politics. Kennedy was appointed the new health minister and immediately headed to Flower's Cove and Lewisporte to have meetings with local officials on the cuts. The end result was today's announcement the cuts will not go ahead. Jones said it is about time Williams and his government recognized the initial decision was wrong "even if it did take the resignation of two cabinet ministers and a byelection to reach this conclusion. "I was surprised that the premier stated that he didn't understand the impact this decision would have on the region, especially when his MHAs have continuously stated that they were providing information on behalf of their constituents," Jones said. "This obviously shows how ineffective government members are in the Williams administration and whether the premier and cabinet even listen to them." Jones said it is clear the decision was reversed because of the byelection in the Flower's Cove district to replace former MHA and cabinet minister Trevor Taylor. "It is unfortunate that government only gave something back to the people when they were looking for something in return," Jones said. "If appropriate consultation and due diligence was completed earlier, the people would not have been forced through such turmoil and uncertainty." More coverage in Friday's print edition.