

# Long medical waitlists need corrective action, not rhetoric says Opposition

Kelvin Parsons, MHA for the District of Burgeo-LaPoile, says government is failing to meet the health care requirements of the people of this province and is calling upon the minister of health to take this matter seriously and address the gaps in service for those awaiting surgical procedures.

Parsons raised the issue of delays in medical wait times in the House of Assembly on Tuesday following numerous reports of delayed and cancelled cardiac surgeries from concerned patients. The most recent incident involves an individual who has

been awaiting emergency surgery for six weeks. Each time he was scheduled for surgery, it was cancelled at the last minute. Last week, he was sedated when he was advised that the surgery would not take place. The family has been told that these delays are the result of a lack of beds in the Intensive Care Unit.

"These issues are very worrisome and are not new," says Parsons. "We continuously hear of these types of delays and are always reassured by government that the issue is being addressed. The minister finally admit-

ted that there are problems that need to be corrected and I challenge him to finally do something so patients are not continuously impacted by cancelled surgeries."

Parsons also raised questions regarding the release of a Canada-wide report by the Wait Time Alliance, a collaboration of some 14 national medical organizations. One of the criticisms directed at Newfoundland and Labrador was that government has not updated its information on wait-times listings for over six months.

"This government likes to believe that it

is transparent and accountable, yet the lack of wait-times reporting highlights once again how information is kept hidden from the public. It is incumbent upon government to publicize not just the five identified priority areas, but to include many more medical procedures so that patients have accurate and timely information on the wait they can expect. Having any type of disease and surgery is stressful enough, but having to endure additional wait-times and being kept in the dark about pertinent information further compromises a patient's health."