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Assessment needed to address chronic care concerns on Northern Peninsula: Opposition **LATEST NEWS**

The Telegram

The need for chronic care beds in the St. Anthony area is growing and creating significant demands on the existing infrastructure in the region, says Marshall Dean, MHA for the District of the Straits-White Bay North. In a news release, Dean says the John M. Gray facility offers 50 chronic care beds to patients in the area. The facility is always at capacity with a growing wait list for beds to open. This has resulted in acute care beds at Curtis Memorial hospital being occupied by patients requiring chronic care services.

"There is an aging population on the northern peninsula and the demand for chronic care beds will continue to increase," Dean said. "Chronic care patients are being forced to occupy acute care beds in the hospital without the necessary programs, recreational services and the additional threat of exposure to illness.

"I have spoken to residents who have been waiting for a chronic care bed since last April. It is obvious that our current facility does not have sufficient capacity to handle the demand and it's simply not good enough for the status quo to continue. I am encouraging both the Department of Health and Community Services and Labrador-Grenfell Health to undertake a needs assessment to determine how best to deal with this growing concern."