

Same-day discharge unacceptable for double-mastectomy patient, politicians say

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A case of a woman who underwent a double mastectomy and was discharged the same day has prompted a Newfoundland and Labrador government review.

But Eastern Health said patients who undergo major procedures are sometimes sent home the same day, as long as the patient consents to it.



Liberal Leader Yvonne Jones raised the case of a breast cancer patient who felt pressured to accept a same-day discharge after double mastectomy surgery.
(CBC)

Liberal Leader Yvonne Jones raised the case of the breast cancer patient in the house of assembly this week, noting that a woman was asked to sign a consent form for same-day release last month because of a lack of beds.

"She had no one at home to care for her and she resisted signing the form. The option was to have her surgery cancelled," Jones said.

Premier Danny Williams, who has since asked the Health Department to review the practice, said he was personally taken aback by the revelation.

"I can tell you from my own perspective, and this government's perspective, if a woman is put on the street after having a double mastectomy and has to sign a consent form to allow that to happen, that is absolutely unacceptable, and if that is the policy, it will be changed forthwith," Williams told the legislature Monday.

Norma Baker, a chief operating officer of Eastern Health, said such situations happen from time to time, and said the patient is always given a choice.

"In the event that the patient is scheduled to be admitted and there isn't a bed available on the day of surgery, then the surgeon may discuss with the patient the option of rebooking surgery on a future date, or they may explore with the patient if appropriate in light of the patient's medical status the option of proceeding with the surgery on that day and the patient being discharged home," she said.

"But it would be the patient's choice."