

## **MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE**

### **STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL STERILIZATION OF INSTRUMENTS**

**October 27, 2020**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. The problems with sterilization of instruments and equipment at Stanton Territorial Hospital will be known to Members through media reports, health authority updates, and even calls from constituents awaiting surgery as I've had. As the problem remains unresolved into its third month, it's time to step up with urgent action.

The issue is as detailed as it is longstanding, but basically, it's this: on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, the hospital's three sterilizer units simultaneously started producing instruments contaminated by moisture. This means the instruments can't be considered sterile, because moisture can attract bacteria. In a series of public updates issued July 24<sup>th</sup>, September 14<sup>th</sup>, and October 5<sup>th</sup>, the health authority has described efforts taken with the facility operator, Dexterra, Boreal Health Partnership, the Department of Infrastructure, and the sterilization equipment manufacturer. The number of sterile instrument packs produced has been increased, but there is no guarantee that packs are reliably sterile. The description of the measure being used to fix the problem is basically a continued jiggling of the many factors that go into successful sterilization: varying instrument wraps and tray methods and sizes, to the adjusting the machines themselves, steam production and delivery, the list goes on, all aimed at finding the perfect combination of factors or settings. What's being described basically sounds like a big experiment.

Stanton has worked to stockpile sterile instrument packs for use in emergency surgeries and for some small elective procedures. However, the authority reported October 5<sup>th</sup> that 124 elective surgeries have been cancelled and remain unscheduled because no reliable fix to the problem can be predicted.

What's at stake here is not the functionality of a technical system but the health and even suffering of our residents. For example, delayed hip-joint surgeries mean day after day of misery for patients awaiting surgery. I don't think it's an over-simplification to say that I have heard of no comparable situation at other hospitals in Canada. We can't get this right, and does it mean that we will never have reliable sterilization at Stanton? I will have questions later today for the Minister of Health and Social Services on an urgent solution to this crisis in patient care. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.