

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL STERILIZATION OF INSTRUMENTS

March 2, 2021

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. The problems with sterilization of instruments and equipment at Stanton Territorial Hospital appear to be over based on a January 14, 2021, update posted on the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority website.

The issues began last July 23 when the hospital's three sterilizer units simultaneously started producing instruments contaminated by moisture. This means the instruments couldn't be considered sterile because moisture can attract bacteria. A series of eight public updates were issued beginning on July 24 and became much more regular and consistent after I pressured the current Minister. The health authority 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 the packs are reliably sterile.

The authority reported that elective surgeries were cancelled, which caused enormous anxiety and sometimes physical suffering for many residents who were left waiting. The latest report indicates that all surgeries, including total joint replacements, are being allowed again although there continues to be some staining of towels used in the sterilization process.

I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services about the cause of the sterilization problems, whether the backlog of surgeries has been cleared, and whether we can prevent this happening again. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.