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B.C. LIBERALS FAIL PATIENTS, STANDARDIZE HALLWAY MEDICINE

VICTORIA – The ongoing crisis and overcrowding in B.C. emergency rooms under the B.C. Liberals continues to worsen as patients are now being told that hallway medicine is standard care and something they should expect, NDP Health Critic Adrian Dix said today.

“Gordon Campbell and Health Minister George Abbott have failed B.C. patients,” said Dix. “Hallway medicine is becoming so commonplace that patients are being told to expect a stretcher in a hallway. It doesn’t matter if you are in emergency or an inpatient ward, hallway medicine in B.C. is the new reality.”

In August, the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority began to distribute a letter to patients at Vancouver General Hospital informing them of what to expect at VGH. The letter makes it clear that all patients should expect possible placement on a stretcher in hallways.

“Under Gordon Campbell’s watch, hallway medicine has become standard care,” said Dix. “The B.C. Liberals have failed to address overcrowded ERs and they have failed to provide basic levels of service to British Columbians. It is a crisis they created.”

Since coming to power, the B.C. Liberals closed one in five acute care beds and shut down long term care facilities across the province. The result is a critical shortage of admitting beds, overcrowded ERs and patient backlogs in various wards. Over the last year, there has been severe overcrowding across the province including hospitals in Vancouver, Surrey, Kelowna, Kamloops and Prince George.

“It’s only the beginning of November,” said Dix. “The real crunch time for ERs is just around the corner and we are still waiting for this government to take action. How many years do British Columbians have to wait before the Premier starts taking overcrowding seriously? How long do we have to accept hallway medicine as the new norm?”

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