

For Immediate Release
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MRI WAITS FOR INTERIOR HEALTH EXTREMELY HIGH

VICTORIA—Wait lists for MRI diagnostics are significantly higher than the B.C. average across the entire Interior Health Region according to data posted on the region's own web site, says Adrian Dix, Opposition Health Critic.

"A patient in Kelowna can wait a median of 245 days for an MRI and 196 days in Kootenay Boundary – that's way too long, said Dix. "That's even worse than the B.C. average of 84 days, which is one of the poorest performances of a province across Canada."

A Canadian Medical Association study released this week shows B.C. patients wait about 84 days for an MRI, which is far longer the national average. The maximum recommended treatment time is 30 days.

"While the B.C. rate is unacceptable, waits in many areas of B.C. are through the roof," said Dix. "This is just not good enough for patients waiting for essential diagnostics – many will suffer irreversible damage if they can't get treatment."

Waits for patients in the Interior Health service delivery area show extremely high waits:

Kelowna General: As high as 245 days, 210 days longer than the recommended maximum

Royal Inland: Consistent at 105 days, or 95 days longer than recommended

Penticton Regional: As high as 168 days, 138 days longer than recommended maximum

Kootenay Boundary Regional: As high as 196 Days, 166 days longer than recommended

East Kootenay Regional: As high as 175 days, 145 days longer than the recommended

"The health authority's own statistics show patients are waiting even longer than the rest of B.C.," said Dix. "There should be no reason B.C. is doing worse than almost every other province. We can solve this problem if the Campbell Liberals invested in public health care."

The CMA report, "*The Economic Costs of Wait Times in Canada*", reveals the length of time patients wait for care in just four areas - joint replacement, sight restoration, cardiac bypass surgery and MRI scans – cost Canada \$14.8 billion last year and lowered government revenues by \$4.4 billion during the same period.

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