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DIX CALLS FOR FUNDING FOR BREAST RECONSTRUCTION SURGERY
Cancer patients left without surgery dates due to funding shortfall

VANCOUVER – Women getting over the loss of their breasts now face obstacles getting breast reconstruction surgery and other rehabilitative treatment due to a lack of funding for these services, says New Democrat Health Critic Adrian Dix.

"Finding doctors who can perform these services is difficult enough, but now the government is restricting access further by not providing the funding for one of the few doctors who can help breast cancer patients," Dix, the MLA for Vancouver – Kingsway, said today.

Dix appeared at a press conference with patients of Dr. Cameron Bowman, a reconstructive surgery specialist who has recently informed 60 breast cancer patients that he has been forced to cancel their surgery because of a lack of funding. As well, 100 women seeking medically necessary breast reduction surgery have had their treatment cancelled.

"Gordon Campbell's promise of timely medical care is ringing hollow for these women who have already gone through difficult treatment for breast cancer," Dix said. "For the sake of these women, the Ministry of Health and the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority should provide the funding to make these treatments possible. This is a problem that can be solved with adequate funding"

Last week, Health Minister George Abbott warned that problems afflicting health care, including code oranges and cancelled surgeries, will not go away for "the next 40 years." He added: "Anyone who thinks this problem is going to go away is dreaming."

"The Vancouver Coastal Health Authority has been given a very tight budget by the Campbell Liberal government. This problem with reconstructive surgery is the direct result of the government's inadequate funding of the coastal health region," Dix said.

"The Ministry of Health and the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority must move today to restore funding for surgical services so that these women can get the treatment they need to get on with their lives," he added.

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