



**NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

NLMA provides update on surgical backlogs

April 27, 2022

St. John’s, NL – In March, the NLMA reported that health system shutdowns and cancelled surgeries have contributed to a backlog of 6,113 non-emergency surgical procedures at the province’s tertiary referral centres in St. John’s, including the Health Sciences Centre and St. Clare’s Mercy Hospital. A month later, the backlog has not improved.

Surgeons in St. John’s advised the NLMA that as of April 12 their combined waitlists totaled 6,797 backlogged surgical cases. The following is a breakdown of their waitlists:

| | Non-oncology | Oncology |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Orthopaedic Surgery | 2,950 | 6 |
| General Surgery | 1,128 | 40 |
| ENT Surgery | 823 | 21 |
| Gynecologic Surgery* | 700 | - |
| Urologic Surgery | 511 | 101 |
| Plastic Surgery | 370 | - |
| Neurosurgery | 105 | 10 |
| Gynecologic Oncology Surgery | - | 17 |
| Thoracic Surgery | 5 | 10 |
| Subtotal: | 6,592 | 205 |
| TOTAL: | 6,797 | |

**The surgical waitlist the NLMA reported in March did not include gynecologic surgery.*

Physicians have advised the NLMA that the problem also extends to hospital surgical sites throughout the province. Therefore, the NLMA continues to call on the provincial government to:

1. Reduce the surgical backlog in the province to pre-pandemic levels by a fixed date.
2. Bring together surgeons and nurses to assist regional health authorities in developing a plan to reduce the surgical backlog and oversee the plan’s implementation.
3. Increase operating room capacity by maximizing the efficiency of OR time and all available operating rooms within regional health authorities.
4. Ensure transparency and accountability to the public by establishing an online dashboard to report the number of backlogged surgical cases to be updated monthly.

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