Tabled by the Member for Humber-Bay of Islands Eddie Joyce -with leave
K Hawkins
April 23/24

The Telegram

The Telegram (St. John's, NL) (web site)
News, Thursday, February 4, 2021 951 words

Also published in February 4, 2021 - Saltwire - Atlantic Canada (web site)
Saltwire - Prince Edward Island (web site)
The Journal Pioneer (Summerside, PE) (web site)
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May 14, 2024

Dwight Ball confident PET scanner commitment in Corner Brook will be met

Diane Crocker

Former premier says he was not part of discussions to put equipment on hold or delay purchase A A CORNER BROOK, N.L. -

Before he was even premier, Dwight Ball made a commitment as leader of the Opposition that a Liberal government would expand cancer care services in the province and put a radiation unit and a PET scanner in the acute care hospital to be built in Corner Brook.

That commitment was made in 2014, long before construction started. The hospital is scheduled to be completed in 2023.

It's a commitment Ball is confident will be met.

On Thursday, Ball told SaltWire Network there was research and analysis conducted before he made the commitment and it was about more than just Western Memorial Regional Hospital.

"This was an extension of the provincial cancer care program," he said.

He said it was about having backup and no interruption in services should something happen to equipment in St. John's, and it was about minimizing the need for people on the west coast to travel to obtain cancer care. Ball said it could even provide another option for the rest of Atlantic Canada.

"I was never part of any discussions that would have put this PET scanner on hold or delay." – Dwight Ball

He said it was always intended that once the radiation therapy unit was in place, a PET scanner or a newer, better piece of diagnostic equipment would be included.

"Whatever this radiation clinic requires in diagnostic imaging at the time, well then that is what will go in to support the radiation program in Corner Brook," he said.

Ball has been following the issue since Health Minister Dr. John Haggie said in early January there would be no PET scanner in the new hospital, and the need for it would be assessed later. Corner Brook MHA Gerry Byrne has said there will be a PET scanner at the hospital when doctors say it's needed.

"I was concerned about it, because I knew that this commitment was made with a lot of work and lot of people involved in it," Ball said.

"I was never part of any discussions that would have put this PET scanner on hold or delay."

ICYMI: What is a PET scanner and what will it do at the new Corner Brook Hospital | The Telegram https://t.co/AHNeOrh1IJ pic.twitter.com/xhjyCffZDT

– The Telegram (@StJohnsTelegram) January 20, 2021

Right before the provincial election was called the government announced it was putting $2 million in trust with the Western Regional Hospital Foundation toward a PET scanner for the new hospital.