



November 20, 2020

John Carpay  
President  
Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedom  
253-7620 Elbow Drive SW  
Calgary, AB T2V 1K2

Dear Mr. Carpay,

Thank you for your letter of September 8, 2020 on behalf of the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms.

Throughout Yukon's response to COVID-19, we have been carefully following the advice and recommendations of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) to ensure the health and safety of Yukoners. The Yukon Hospital Corporation (YHC) has worked closely with the CMOH to determine what control measures are appropriate at Yukon hospitals in response to COVID-19. These measures include steps to protect acute care capacity for the support of patients requiring urgent and emergent care, ensuring the safety of workers, and meeting the needs of patients. Pre-appointment screening, on-site screening, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting, and following the Safe Six are all in place and supported.

As part of this process, in March 2020, YHC temporarily decreased some services such as non-urgent and non-emergency procedures and surgeries. During this period, essential services were available. From March 23 to June 8, the following impacts on surgical service occurred:

- From March 23 to May 8, only urgent and emergent surgical services were provided, which amounted to roughly 55% of normal surgical service volumes;
- From May 11 to June 8, normal surgical service volumes were increased to 75% of normal surgical services; and,
- On June 8, the resident surgical program resumed full elective surgical services with dental and visiting specialist surgeries resuming full elective surgical services on June 29.

During this period, 51 elective surgical cases that were not deemed urgent or emergent were deferred and rebooked. All patients affected were contacted by hospital staff and provided with a new surgery date. YHC anticipates all of these cases will be completed by the end of the calendar year.

Surgical speciality and general surgery has reviewed and identified requirements for addressing their respective backlogs. Some services can be managed without changes to available operative times, while other services that require additional operative time are

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being supported by YHC. Backlog within these areas are on track to be addressed by the end of the fiscal year. Due to the size of our jurisdiction, we do not comment on specifics to ensure the privacy of Yukoners.

Additionally, throughout Yukon's response to COVID-19, patients requiring emergency or urgent medical imaging or laboratory support were able to receive the care they needed.

- In April, these services were operating at 50% of normal medical imaging and outpatient lab volumes.
- In May, capacity was expanded to 70% of normal medical imaging volumes. To ensure physical distancing was observed, the outpatient lab began booking appointments. Lab capacity was also expanded to 70% of normal volumes. At this time, medical imaging and the outpatient lab were able to support urgent and semi-urgent care needs.
- In July, the outpatient lab's capacity was expanded to 100% of normal outpatient lab volumes and supports patients with urgent, semi-urgent and non-urgent care needs.
- In September, the Wait List Strategy for medical imaging was finalized with the expectation that all non-urgent care needs will be met within three to six months of implementation.

Our government has worked with the CMOH throughout the pandemic to remind Yukoners to not put their health on hold. In April, the Department of Health and Social Services launched a campaign encouraging Yukoners to contact their physician to discuss their health care needs. Additionally, we supported Yukoners to access virtual care alternatives and increased mental health supports.

Again, Yukoners were able to access health care services throughout this period and were encouraged to contact their physician if their health deteriorated or changed.

Thank you again for your interest in the steps Yukon has taken to ensure the health and safety of Yukoners.

Mahsi,



Pauline Frost  
Minister of Health and Social Services