

Letter - Re-open surgery at Lady Minto – Driftwood - Published: November 24, 2010 10:00 AM

The new operating room at Lady Minto Hospital was opened in January of 2005 and was closed by the Vancouver Island Health Authority on June 30, 2008.

Approximately \$3 million of taxpayer money and donations (by way of the LMH Foundation board) was spent to construct this new facility which was only in use for two and a half years. Closing it doesn't make sense. Islanders must now go off-island for their surgical needs, which means they leave their support group and are subjected to various unnecessary costs. This is particularly hard on our elder citizens. The Transportation Assistance Program is not paid by VIHA but by the Medical Services Plan, so sending islanders off-island for these services does not affect the VIHA budget.

Islanders for Self-Government is hesitant to take a position on any local issues that do not deal with local governance and the process included therein. However, the ISG board is convinced that the vast majority of islanders want our surgery services restored.

Islanders are becoming increasingly concerned over recent rumours that VIHA is planning further funding cuts that would perhaps threaten the existence of Lady Minto as we have, for many years, known this facility. It is a vital institution for residents of Salt Spring and the Gulf Islands.

Any level of reduced services for our aging population would be disastrous.

In the absence of a local government body to represent the residents, Islanders for Self-Government appeals to the provincial government and VIHA to reconsider their decisions and assure residents that we will continue to receive care at our hospital as always.

Ken Marr,
ISG President

http://www.bclocalnews.com/vancouver_island_south/saltspringislanddriftwood/opinion/letters/110409679.html