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Status Of Sleep Apnea Treatment At Stanton Territorial Hospital

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak today with regard to an issue that I brought up in the House in the past and that is the condition of sleep apnea and the devastating impact that it can have on a person and a family's quality of life.

In May of 2005, the former Minister said that a report was being done by Dr. Remmers from Calgary in regard to the continuation and modernization of the sleep centre at the Stanton Territorial Hospital. I have not seen a copy of that report and, Mr. Speaker, later today I will be questioning the new Minister on exactly what is happening out at Stanton with regard to sleep apnea.

Sleep apnea is a very common medical disorder. Sufferers with this condition need to have their condition properly diagnosed in a sleep lab prior to deciding on a form of treatment. This condition can cause severe drowsiness, the sufferer is unable to concentrate at work, stay alert, take care of children or drive safely. Some sufferers cannot even lie down without the fear of suffocating.

One of the forms of treatment is to sleep with the aid of a CPAP or an oxygen machine which is not covered by NWT health insurance. Mr. Speaker, I would like to know exactly why this machine is not covered or insured. Last year, the former Minister stated that there was a working group currently reviewing the issue and they would come up with the best way for the usage of the CPAP machines to be covered. Mr. Speaker, it's 18 months later and I am still getting concerns from constituents that extended health benefits is not covering the cost for these machines, which are approximately \$1,800.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the new Minister can explain to me today why this is still the case. Mahsi.

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