



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 144 | NUMBER 072 | 2nd SESSION | 40th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT (HANSARD)

Wednesday, June 10, 2009

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

Oral Questions

Medical Isotopes

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, last week, the Minister of Natural Resources told Canadians that the isotope crisis was under control and that there was nothing to worry about. Yesterday, the president of the Ontario Association of Nuclear Medicine said that some hospitals will run out of medical isotopes by tomorrow or Friday.

Can the minister confirm that, yes or no?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, the situation related to the supply will vary by day, by community and by provinces. We will continue to work with the provinces and territories to identify alternatives. The alternatives are there now, to be accessed by provinces and territories as they see the need. We will continue to work with the provinces and territories in addressing some of their concerns.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of Natural Resources said that Canada was equipped to secure international supplies of isotopes. She claimed to have the international infrastructure in place to address the shortage. The minister has been trying to portray herself as leading and winning on isotopes, but Canadian cancer patients are losing precious time.

Will the minister admit she cannot predict how much of the shortage in Canadian hospitals can be made up by international suppliers?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, I have indicated already that Canada has a leadership position with respect to the global supply. In fact, next week I will be chairing a panel at a conference in Toronto, which brings together, in one room, all the world leading producers of medical isotopes.

What is important is to show and indicate that we have close contact with the industry on this issue. Indeed, we can report from industry that next week more than 50% of normal supply will be available. We are going to keep in contact with the medical community and keep pushing out the information so Canadians know what is going on.