

# Dr. Hamish Hwang Inc.

General Surgery, GI Endoscopy & Esophageal Physiology

This letter is intended to explain why you have to wait so long for your surgery.

Surgery is a complex undertaking. It requires multiple people working seamlessly together within an institution to create a safe environment for your surgery. As a general surgeon, I am unable to perform your surgery anywhere else but at a hospital. In order to perform your surgery safely, I must have an equipped operating room, a team of healthcare providers and sometimes a post-operative hospital bed for you to recover in. After major surgery many patients require extended rehabilitation. Though you and I decide together on the merits of an operation and its urgency, I cannot actually perform the operation until hospital time is made available to me.

There is only a limited amount of operating room time. As a surgeon, the system only allows me the ability to operate on a limited number of days for six to seven hours per day. If this involves very complex operations I may be able to do only one or two procedures in a day.

In British Columbia, we have an aging population and for this reason the number of cancer surgeries is increasing. **The biggest risk factor for cancer is age.** Because of the urgent nature of diseases such as breast or colon cancer, patients needing cancer surgery are prioritized ahead of other patients. OR time is limited. As the number of cancer surgeries grows this leads to longer and longer wait times for patients with surgical problems that are not cancer related.

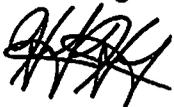
As your surgeon, I recognize the disability being caused by your medical problem and its increasing impact on your quality of life. I would like nothing more than to relieve you of your discomfort, but I am restricted by the resources that are available. Even if I sent you to one of my colleagues, you would then be added to his or her wait list.

So what is the solution? **More operating room time and more resources.** This would allow surgeons to be able to perform more surgeries in one week, and reduce your wait for surgery. More funding from the government is needed to open additional operating rooms, recruit more surgeons to work in our hospitals, hire nurses and shorten wait lists. The government has already been able to do this for operations for cataracts and joint replacement.

The government does listen. They listen to **tax-paying voters** like you, the more than 12,000 people awaiting surgery by a general surgeon in BC. You can make a difference. Please consider writing a letter to:

Hon Minister Margaret McDiarmid, Ministry of Health Services, 1515 Blanshard Street, Victoria, BC V8W 3C8  
Kari Hedstrom, PCQO, 200-1815 Kirschner Road, Kelowna BC V1Y 4N7 kari.hedstrom@interiorhealth.ca  
Norm Embree, Chair of IHA Board c/o IH Corporate Office, 1815 Kirschner Road, Kelowna, BC V1Y 4N7

Your surgeon,



Dr. Hamish Hwang MD FRCSC FACS