

## **For Immediate Release**

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Carleton Place & District Memorial Hospital Foundation  
Carleton Place, ON

### **Carleton Place Hospital highlights Patient Safety Initiatives**

The Canadian Patient Safety Institute has declared October 21 – 28, 2005, Canadian Patient Safety Week. This is the first Canadian week of its kind and the Carleton Place & District Memorial Hospital (CPDMH) is taking this opportunity to highlight some of the initiatives it has put into practice to further enhance patient safety.

The first, and perhaps one of the most significant, new initiatives is the implementation of unit dose medication. This system helps reduce dispensing errors commonly found in the manual process as well as help CPDMH control costs. All preparation of the medication is done by the pharmacy and there are checks and balances to ensure accurate doses are given to the patient.

CPDMH has also developed a policy that identifies patients with mobility issues. This policy has helped reduce the number of patient falls and potential injuries to both patients and staff. Full adaptation of the policy has involved the purchase of new patient lifts to reduce injuries to staff from lifting patients and the use of transfer boards and lift sheets. Transfer boards are used to move patients from beds to stretchers, or from stretcher to stretcher, within the different departments of the hospital and lift sheets are used to help move patients with mobility issues within their beds.

“Patient safety is always a concern for anyone in healthcare and here at CPDMH it’s an issue we are always looking for ways to improve” stated Mike Gagne, CEO of CPDMH. “We have adopted a needless IV system and safety engineered needles that has virtually eliminated needle stick injuries. As well we have added a patient wandering alarm to ensure any patients that may be confused or suffering from dementia are not restricted to their rooms”

With this being the start of flu season, CPDMH is also offering to provide the flu shot to any of its patients that are interested. In addition, since hand washing is the most effective way to prevent infections and the spread of dangerous germs throughout the hospital, a hand washing policy has been put into place for visitors and staff. The purpose of this policy is to protect visitors to the hospital, and help prevent patients from developing complicated infections that may delay their recovery.

The Canadian Patient Safety Institute is of the view that patient safety deserves to be one of the top five issues on the national healthcare agenda and hoped the Canadian Safety week would draw public attention to the concerns associated with patient safety, and to initiatives that have helped address the issue.

In Canada, 7.5% of patients admitted to acute care settings experience adverse events. By comparison, the rate of adverse events in various other countries ranges from 2.9-16.6%. In addition a recent study from the University of Calgary suggested that 9,000 of 24,000 Canadian patients die annually following an adverse event in hospital. That is more than the number of deaths attributed to breast cancer, motor vehicle accidents and HIV combined.

“The safety of our patients, and of course our staff, is our number one priority and over the past few years our hospital has taken a number of steps to minimize any potential risks to the wellbeing of both of these groups”, continued Mr. Gagne. “As we grow as an organization, we will constantly monitor how health care is being delivered and where applicable, make the necessary changes to reduce the possibility of injury to our patients and staff.”

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