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Media Release: For immediate release

G&M Norovirus Outbreak Declared Over

Collingwood, ON

Officials at the Collingwood G&M Hospital in consultation with the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit announced this morning that the recent outbreak of Norovirus on the first floor Medical Inpatient Unit is now over.

The Medical Inpatient Unit was closed to new admissions and visitors since January 7th when several patients and staff became ill with gastrointestinal illness caused by the Norovirus.

"In the past week our nursing and housekeeping staff have been working diligently to ensure that we cared for all patients while containing the Norovirus outbreak to the first floor Medical Unit only," says Norah Holder, VP of Patient Services and Chief Nursing Officer. "Their hard work ensured the virus did not spread to other units of the Hospital."

Dr. Mark Quigg, Co-Chief of Infection Control at the G&M and Loretta Urban-Kew, Infection Control Co-coordinator led the Hospital's Outbreak Management Team, working closely with officials from the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit to monitor and control the outbreak.

"The public should understand that Norovirus and Influenza are both prevalent in our community at this time," states Dr. Quigg. "We continue to stress that members of the public who are not feeling well for any reason, should not visit the Hospital. Although there is no vaccine to prevent Norovirus, flu shots are still available in our community through family physicians. If not, you can contact the Health Unit. These shots will prevent Influenza. I encourage everyone who has not already done so to get a flu shot today."

Dr. Anne Engell, Chief of the Medical Staff adds, "This was a difficult time for all patients, physicians and staff. Even during an outbreak we must continue to care for every patient that presents to us. We had to admit several inpatients to the Emergency Department throughout the week and staff on the second floor Surgical Unit were required to look after extra patients because the Medical Unit was closed to admissions. I would like to thank all involved as well as the public who were so co-operative during this difficult time."

The best defense against all viruses is diligent and frequent hand washing.

If you have any questions about this release please contact Norah Holder, Vice President of Patient Services and Chief Nursing Officer, Collingwood General and Marine Hospital at 444.8641.

Collingwood G&M Hospital (G&M) is a 72-bed hospital located in Collingwood, Ontario (approximately 90 minutes north of Toronto) that serves more than 60,000 permanent residents and 2.5 Million annual visitors to the communities of Wasaga Beach, Collingwood, Stayner, Creemore and the Blue Mountains. The G&M is an acute care hospital providing emergency care, diagnostic services including lab, imaging and cardio respiratory therapy, as well as two inpatient units (medicine and surgery). In addition, the G&M also provides care in speciality areas including obstetrics, orthopaedics, intensive care and surgery. The Hospital also provides out patient care including dialysis and a wide range of clinics including mental health and rehabilitation services. The G&M continues to provide care close to home for our community and plays a key role as an integrated orthopaedic centre for our region. For more information please visit our website at www.cgmh.on.ca and our Foundation website at www.cgmhf.com

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