

January 10, 2011

Media Release: For immediate release

Illness on Medical Unit Identified as Norovirus

Collingwood, ON

Officials at the Collingwood G&M Hospital announced today that the gastro-intestinal outbreak which necessitated closure of the Hospital's Medical Unit has been caused by Norovirus. The virus was positively identified by the Public Health Lab late Friday afternoon.

Norovirus causes nausea, diarrhea and/or vomiting in people. This virus is commonly found throughout North America and is very infectious. Norovirus illnesses occur throughout the year but are more common in winter months and affect all age groups. There is no vaccine or medicine that will prevent a Norovirus infection but the best defense against it is diligent hand washing.

To reduce spread of this illness, the Medical Unit was closed to new inpatient admissions and all visitors on January 7th.

The Hospital will work with families who have compassionate reasons for coming to the Medical Unit. The G&M encourages family and friends to keep in touch with patients via telephone and email. Emails to patients can be sent through the Hospital's website www.cgmh.on.ca.

Outpatient services (including Diagnostic Imaging and Ambulatory Care clinics) remain open at this time however some elective surgeries have been cancelled due to lack of available inpatient beds.

"If anyone is ill for any reason, they are being asked not to visit the Hospital," says Norah Holder, VP of Patient Services and Chief Nursing Officer. "Your adherence to this guideline will help us to keep this outbreak under control and protect all patients and staff at the G&M."

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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