



PUBLIC NOTICE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cancer Care Ontario – Systemic Treatment Administration

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Wednesday, August 15, 2018—In June 2018, Cancer Care Ontario (CCO), the provincial agency that monitors the standard and quality of cancer care, notified Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) that our “closed system” practice for delivering specific intravenous (IV) medications may have resulted in a reduced dose for some patients, due to more than the expected amount of drug remaining in the IV tubing. **This issue is limited to specific drugs provided in small-volume bags of 50 mL or 100 mL. Cancer Care Ontario has indicated that 28 hospitals across the province have been affected.**

As soon as we became aware of this issue, we took immediate steps to ensure our patients receive their full dosage while also ensuring safe handling of these medications by staff. We then began notifying active patients of the issue and the change in our practice, which includes a flushing of the IV tubing to ensure any remaining medication in the tubing gets to the patient. **Notification to the twenty-three (23) affected NHH patients in active treatment is now close to complete, together with assessment by the patients’ oncologists to determine whether any change in treatment is required. NHH expects to complete active patient notification by August 20.**

Many intravenous medications require unique processes and equipment, such as pumps, filters and IV tubing. The equipment and set-up can vary based on a number of factors, including the medication itself and the needs of the patient being treated. The “closed system” practice for administering specific IV drugs to patients in cancer care is aligned with the standards set by Cancer Care Ontario, and was developed and implemented to ensure that these drugs are safely given to patients without having adverse effects on those who are handling and providing the treatments on a daily basis.

It is important to note that no two patients are alike, and that physicians in cancer care monitor each patient’s individual progress throughout their treatment and in follow-up appointments, and make medication adjustments as needed based on medical assessments and the patient’s test results.

Delivering safe, quality care is Northumberland Hills Hospital’s highest priority, and the highest priority of our regional and provincial cancer care partners: the Durham Regional Cancer Centre and Cancer Care Ontario. We are working with other affected hospitals, the Durham Regional Cancer Centre and with CCO as they lead a root cause analysis to determine what factors might have contributed to this issue.

On Monday, August 13, 2018, Cancer Care Ontario published further context on this issue on their public website. To see that information, please click here:

<https://www.cancercareontario.ca/en/systemic-treatment-administration>

Single point of contact for NHH patients with questions

NHH patients with any questions or concerns related to Systemic Treatment Administration are invited to contact Susan Walsh, NHH's Vice President of Patient Care and Chief Nursing Executive, at 905-377-7756 and leave a confidential voicemail. Calls to this line will be returned within two business days.

NHH media contact: Jennifer Gillard, jgillard@nhh.ca or 905-377-7757.

About Northumberland Hills Hospital – Located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, NHH delivers a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. Acute services include emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, obstetrical care and palliative care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care and rehabilitation. Mental health care, chemotherapy, dialysis and 16 other ambulatory care clinics are offered on an outpatient basis through partnerships with regional centres and nearby specialists. NHH offers a full range of diagnostic services, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) and mammography. The hospital serves the catchment area of west Northumberland County. A mixed urban and rural population of approximately 60,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs approximately 600 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians and volunteers. NHH is an active member of the Central East Local Health Integration Network. For more information, please visit www.nhh.ca or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

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