



NEWS RELEASE / COMMUNIQUÉ

For immediate release:
October 17, 2011

Ottawa Public Health notifies patients of infection prevention lapse

Ottawa – The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care has advised Ottawa Public Health (OPH) that an inspection of a non-hospital clinic in Ottawa by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) found that some infection prevention and cleaning protocols were not always followed.

Following the CPSO inspection and a subsequent OPH investigation into the issue, registered letters are being sent to approximately 6,800 patients who underwent a procedure at the clinic between April 2002 and June 2011.

The clinic, operated by Dr. Christiane Farazli, is located at 1081 Carling Avenue, Suite 606. Dr. Farazli has worked with OPH during the investigation and has co-signed the letter to her patients. Endoscopic procedures are no longer being performed at the facility, which otherwise remains in operation.

As a result of its investigation and consultations with communicable disease experts, OPH believes that there is a very low risk that patients may have been exposed to Hepatitis B virus, Hepatitis C virus or HIV during the tests. The risk of associated infection are believed to be less than 1 in 1 million for Hepatitis B, less than 1 in 50 million for Hepatitis C, and less than 1 in 3 billion for HIV.

“Even though the risk of infection for those who had the procedures related to this issue is very low, we wanted to ensure that affected patients were made aware of the situation so that they can consider being tested for these infections,” said Dr. Isra Levy, Medical Officer of Health.

“We are aware of the distress these letters may cause and we have worked to ensure that important information on how to be tested and how to seek medical advice is included,” said Levy. “We have also notified local family physicians of the issue to ensure that they are aware of the context and are able to support any patients who come to them.”

“I remain committed to the safety and well-being of my patients and am co-operating fully with OPH in providing patients with this notification”, said Dr. Farazli “I sincerely regret that the issues that were identified in my facility occurred and I apologize for any inconvenience or anxiety that patients may experience upon receiving this notification. I would also like to reassure patients that the issues that led to this notification have been addressed and that I will be available to support them through this process”.

The letters include information for patients who would like to be tested. These are free blood tests and patients will need to go to a laboratory to have blood taken. If a patient would like to be tested they have several options which are outlined in the letter.

Ottawa Public Health has established a dedicated information line for residents who have questions related to this issue. Any person who underwent endoscopy in the facility during the time period

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110 Laurier Avenue West,
Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1
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mentioned and who has not received a letter by Tuesday, October 25th should contact Ottawa Public Health.

The OPH dedicated information line's number is 613-580-2888 between 8:30 a.m. and 9:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday) and from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (Saturday and Sunday). For additional information, please visit www.ottawa.ca/health.

Patients are being advised not to go to a hospital emergency department for blood testing. Hospitals will re-direct patients seeking blood tests for this issue to call OPH.

Additional Information provided to patients:

If you would like to be tested for Hepatitis B virus, Hepatitis C virus, and/or HIV, you have several options:

1. You can see your own doctor or go to a walk-in clinic. Please take this letter, the enclosed fact sheets and the enclosed envelope to the doctor. The envelope labelled "Please give this envelope to your doctor" contains a letter for the doctor and a special Public Health Ontario Laboratories requisition form. You may then go to a community medical laboratory to have the blood drawn. You will need to show your Ontario Health (OHIP) card at the lab. Please bear in mind that it may be busy at a lab early in morning and there may be a wait. When the test results come back, your physician will arrange for any necessary advice and follow-up.
2. If you do not have a personal physician or you do not have an Ontario Health (OHIP) card, you may call Ottawa Public Health's dedicated information line at **613-580-2888**. OPH nurses can tell you how to fill in the Patient Information part of the Laboratory Requisition which you received in the mail. You can then go to a lab to have the blood drawn.
3. You also have the option to see Dr. Farazli and then go to a community medical laboratory to have the blood drawn. When the results come back, Dr. Farazli will arrange for any necessary advice and follow-up.

For more information:

City of Ottawa Media contact
613-580-2450

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
416-967-2611
Toll Free: 1-800-268-7096 Ext. 611

Public inquiries
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