

January 4, 2005

Dear Patient:

We are grateful that you chose Durham Regional Hospital for your recent healthcare needs. We sincerely hope you were pleased with your care. The health and welfare of our patients is (and always will be) our primary concern, and for this reason, we want to inform you that we recently learned of a possible problem in the cleaning process of surgical instruments. Sterilization, which is the last step in the preparation of instruments prior to use, was not affected, and we believe that there was very little risk to our patients. Nonetheless, we are following up with all patients who had procedures or care requiring the use of sterilized instruments during the period of time in question. We ask you to report any signs of infection such as fever, pain and/or redness or drainage at the site of the incision. Typically, these symptoms would occur anywhere from 3 to 30 days after the procedure or care. We have contacted your surgeon or physician. If you have or are experiencing any of these symptoms, we ask that you contact him or her. Or you may contact our Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Edward LaMay, at 470-8538.

We apologize for any concern this letter may raise. Please be assured that patient safety is our number one priority. As part of our ongoing commitment to quality and safety, we continuously monitor the infection rates of our patients and have determined that there has been no increase in the rate of infections at Durham Regional Hospital during the period in question. Thus, we remain confident that, despite the potential problem of the pre-sterilization process, the risk of infection for you is no more than the risk normally associated with the procedure you underwent.

Thank you again for choosing Durham Regional Hospital for your care. If you have any questions or concerns about the information contained in this letter, please contact Dr. LaMay at the above phone number.

Sincerely,

David P. McQuaid
Chief Executive Officer