

## Covenant Health notifying patients of air quality issue at the Misericordia Community Hospital

Risk to notified surgical and obstetrical patients is considered very low

Friday, September 28, 2018

Covenant Health is notifying 473 patients that heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) standards for positive air pressure were not adequately maintained during their surgical or obstetrical procedures undertaken at the Misericordia Community Hospital (MCH) between May 21, 2018 and July 18, 2018.

The increased risk to patients is considered very low; however, as a precaution, all affected patients are being informed.

Maintaining positive air pressure, which reduces the inflow of air from surrounding areas, is only one of several factors that contributes to maintaining an environment that minimizes the risk of infection. Operating rooms maintain a positive pressure compared to the surrounding space to minimize airflow from areas outside of the operating room that may be less sterile.

“We understand that this information may be concerning to patients who underwent surgical procedures during this time frame,” said Dr. Robert Black, Associate Chief Medical Officer and Medical Director, MCH. “But it’s important to note that the increased risk of infection is very low and steps were taken immediately to rectify the problem as soon as it was identified.”

Remedial action has been undertaken and there is no ongoing increased risk to patients. Air quality standards are currently being met or exceeded in all operating rooms at the MCH. A comprehensive review of this event is being conducted to ensure the ongoing safety of patients. Three operating rooms and two labour and delivery suites were affected by the event.

Covenant Health is committed to patient safety and transparency and has a responsibility to inform all patients whose surgeries were affected during this time frame, even when the risks are very low.

During this time period, 2663 surgical procedures were performed at the Misericordia. Over 82 per cent of patients who had surgical procedures during this time period were not impacted. Only those individuals whose surgical procedures occurred during this event will receive notification letters from Covenant Health.

Patients affected by this event who have questions or concerns are being encouraged to contact their surgeon who performed the procedure. Those who require contact information for their surgeon can contact Covenant Health Patient Relations at 1-877-295-6344.

**Contact:**

Karen Diaper, Covenant Health Communications  
Phone: 780.394.7027

**Covenant Health** is one of Canada's largest Catholic health care organization with over 15,000 physicians, employees and volunteers serving in 12 communities across Alberta. A major provider in Alberta's integrated health system, Covenant Health works with Alberta Health Services and community partners to positively influence the health of Albertans through a broad range of programs and services. [CovenantHealth.ca](http://CovenantHealth.ca)