

## **Town Hall Meeting-Recent Sentinel Events**

February 26, 2010

Thank you for attending today's Town Hall.

I thought it important to have an open discussion regarding the recent sentinel events that have occurred in this community.

These sentinel events have shaken the foundation of the local, provincial and national health care system.

Yesterday a local radio station conducted a poll asking the question "has the recent medical errors that have occurred at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital make you call into the question the healthcare services in our community".

Close to 70% of those who responded said yes – their trust in our local healthcare system has been negatively impacted.

The two unnecessary locally performed surgical cases have rocked the core of the unquestioned trust relationship between physician and patient. Between caregiver and patient. Between healthcare provider and patient. Between hospital and patient.

At Windsor Regional Hospital we have always stated hospitals are stressful enough. Patients that attend hospitals arrive with anxiety already.

Imagine now arriving and questioning the physician's interpretation of a test or the test itself. These have always been taken as a matter of course and never questioned.

That has now changed and possibly changed forever.

As healthcare providers we have to respect and recognize that patients attending our hospital will be even more anxious than normal. They will be asking to view their test results and their medical records. They will be asking more questions. Their loved ones will be asking more questions.

We have to respect their heightened anxiety now more than ever. We cannot minimize or criticize their questions. We have always been know as a team of caring and compassionate staff at Windsor Regional while at the same time providing exceptional care. This is going to be tested more now than ever.

The community has a right to question us. Unfortunately we have lost some of their trust. As a healthcare community we need to regain their trust. As leaders in the Windsor Essex healthcare community we have to lead in regaining their trust.

Even though these unnecessary surgeries did not place at Windsor Regional we did not ignore them. Our physician and clinical leadership took a step back and asked – could this happen at Windsor Regional?

The answer is clearly yes. We are fooling ourselves if we think we are immune to these errors or harming patients.

Remember 8% of the patients attending a hospital are harmed. The only way to start to reduce that number is to admit it is happening at your hospital. We have admitted that fact.

Our surgical leadership looked at the surgical checklist that is being implemented and decided to enhance it by requiring the physician to bring in their laboratory tests into the or and perform a

final check on what they say before the surgery is commenced. To ensure they have not been misread. I want to thank the surgical team for showing their leadership and creating a best practice at Windsor Regional Hospital even though the events did not occur here.

The recent pathology issue and review announced is troubling. We have not seen the full impact of this problem.

On February 12, I was called by Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital informing me that one of the Pathologists that is primarily performing services at Hotel-Dieu was found to have made errors that resulted in patient harm.

We were informed that this same pathologist performed services for our hospital for a six-week period last year.

Immediately I called our team together and health records pulled all of this Pathologists records and slides. Our Chief of Pathology reviewed the slides one-by-one and by February 16<sup>th</sup> determined that there were no errors of clinical significance.

However, the problem does not stop there. This Pathologist worked at Hotel Dieu for some 7 years.

We are supporting Hotel Dieu on completing a through review of the Pathologist's slides at Hotel Dieu. Through the work of our clinical leadership we are first focusing on the most recent cases that pose the highest risk. So far a review of 600 plus cases have not disclosed any errors. However, it will take approximately another three weeks to complete this review.

The plan was to then conduct a parallel external review of these slides.

Yesterday the Minister of Health of Ontario has indicated that she will be providing support to aid with an external review to ensure no patients are being harmed and build confidence back into the system. Again, it will take time for our community to trust our hospital laboratory system. We have to accept this and respect this.

**As the famous quote states**

**It takes years to build up trust, and only seconds to destroy it.**

Recently we also had a sentinel event at Windsor Regional with the death of young girl in our emergency department. Being the father of a nine-year-old son I could not imagine losing him. I cannot even say I know how this young girl's parents feel. My thoughts turn to them frequently.

I also know how devastated our staff was as a result of this incident. They did all they could do to save her life.

After this incident we conducted both an internal and external review of what occurred. Neither the internal reviewers nor external reviewer was aware of each other's recommendations or report.

The audits were completed and the recommendations have been submitted to the coroner. In addition, the ER staff is implementing all of the recommendations.

Both the internal and external review concluded that none of the recommending changes to our system either individually or collectively would have changed the result of this tragic event. However, as always, we have to continue to learn form these incidents to improve our overall system for the benefit of all the patients we serve. We will continue to do this.

As stated these sentinel events have rocked our healthcare community foundation. However, at the same time you are individually and collectively making amazing strides at enhancing patient quality and safety at Windsor Regional.

A few months ago we were recognized for our clinical excellence at the international OHA Conference by being the hospital with the most Clinical Best Practices and the Best of the Best. In addition, more recently having 16 posters displayed at the Nursing Conference in Windsor and next month being recognized by the Canadian Patient Safety Institute with National Awards for Patient Quality and Safety.

These recognitions are continuing our strategic direction of embedding patient quality and safety in the culture of our hospital, benefiting the health of our patients and will go along way to playing our part in rebuilding the trust in our local healthcare system.

We are individually and collectively leaders in our local and provincial healthcare system. Our community is calling upon our leadership to lead them through these difficult times and collectively be better and stronger for it.

Always remember that the ability to summon positive emotions during periods of intense stress lies at the heart of effective leadership.

I want to end by reading a letter I received yesterday from a patient

[See below]

As a leader in healthcare in this community and across the province I call upon all of you individually and collectively to continue to lead the way and continue to provide outstanding care with compassion.

Thank-you for coming

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RECEIVED

FEB 25 2010

PRESIDENT AND CEO

February 16, 2010

1995 Lens Avenue  
Windsor, Ontario  
N8W 1L9

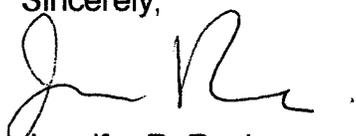
Dear Mr. Musyj:

On April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009, our second daughter Sienna Dawn was born two months premature at Mount Sinai hospital in Toronto. I am a Windsor resident and was treated by Dr. Mundle prenatally, but due to severe complications with the pregnancy, I was referred to Mount Sinai and my daughter's birth was arranged to occur there. As a result of her prematurity and a lymphatic disorder, Sienna spent ninety six days in the NICU in Toronto before being transferred to Windsor. She spent an additional two weeks in the NICU at Windsor Regional Hospital before being initially discharged, plus another two week stay a month later and a one week stay recently at Children's Hospital in London.

After spending a great deal of time in three different hospitals in Ontario, the level of care we have received at WRH has been of the highest standard. The NICU facility is by far the nicest, cleanest and most family-friendly unit we have visited. The nursing staff was highly skilled, patient, friendly and accommodating. I always felt at ease and comforted leaving Sienna at night knowing that she would not only be well taken care of, but that she was also safe due to the quality security system.

Requiring special commendation and what truly makes WRH stand out from the other hospitals, is the expertise and quality of care provided by your medical team. Dr. Mundle and staff provided exceptional service throughout the weekly appointments I had during my pregnancy. The staff of the Neonatal Follow-up Clinic, in particular Dr. Adie, is also amazing. Dr. Adie has been one of Sienna's doctors since she was transferred to Windsor. From a medical standpoint, Dr. Adie's superior level of knowledge, in combination with his past experiences have led to a treatment course for my daughter that has caused her progress to astound many professionals. Dr. Adie's compassion and love for his patients and medicine is clearly felt by those he treats.

As residents of Windsor we are blessed to have such a high quality institution as WRH and in my opinion, some of the best doctors in Ontario. Congratulations on having such an exceptional organization.

Sincerely,  
  
Jennifer R. Reale