



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Clay Holtzman
Communications & Public Affairs
media@mmc.org

Maine Medical Center receives confirmation that patient had rare brain disorder

PORTLAND, Maine - Maine Medical Center today received confirmation that a patient treated at the hospital has Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, a degenerative brain disorder caused by an infectious type of protein.

Hospital officials learned earlier in the week that a patient appeared to have the rare condition based on an initial biopsy result. On Friday the National Prion Disease Pathology Surveillance Center at Case Western University provided confirmation of the diagnosis.

Transmission of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in a hospital setting is extremely rare, with no confirmed incidence of such transmission in more than 20 years. Nevertheless the hospital took extraordinary steps to assure patient safety. Approximately 150 elective surgery cases were rescheduled Wednesday and Thursday while the hospital decontaminated surgical equipment and facilities in accordance with guidelines set by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"We thought it important to go above and beyond to assure the safety of our patients," said Joel Botler, M.D., chief medical officer at MMC. While the hospital does track surgical equipment used in each case, the decision was made not to rely on tracking and instead make sure that any piece of equipment that could potentially be affected was treated. "Now that we know this case is confirmed, we can see that our

response was 100 percent appropriate and that patients should feel confident in the safety of their care at Maine Medical Center," added Botler.

The hospital is now looking at the types of procedures performed and instruments used to determine which patients should be specifically contacted because they were treated prior to the initial pathology report showing a patient had Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

"We are in the process of reaching out to the small number of patients who we think should be notified based on the details of their specific case," said Botler. "Our staff members have been fielding calls from patients who have legitimate concerns and questions about their care. Let me be clear, only a small number of patients who have had surgery at MMC have been exposed to any degree of risk, and that risk is exceedingly low approaching zero."

Botler said more than 100 MMC employees worked around the clock to decontaminate equipment. In the meantime, other Maine hospitals loaned equipment so that MMC could perform the emergency surgeries that are required of the state's largest medical center and Maine's only Level 1 Trauma Center.

"We want to thank our amazing team here at Maine Medical Center," said Botler. "This is an especially rare circumstance in medicine, and the men and women here responded with the utmost professionalism and dedication to make sure we continue to provide our patients with excellent, safe patient-centered care. We want to also thank our patients for their understanding and apologize for any inconvenience and concern this has caused them and their families. Finally we'd like to thank all of our colleagues in the statewide healthcare community who have come to our assistance."

About Maine Medical Center

Maine Medical Center (MMC), recognized as the number-one ranked hospital in Maine by *U.S. News and World Report for 2016-2017*, is a complete health care resource for the people of Greater Portland and the entire state, as well as northern New England. Incorporated in 1864, MMC is the state's largest medical center, licensed for 637 beds and employing nearly 6,500 people. MMC's unique role as both a community hospital and a referral center requires an unparalleled depth and breadth of services, including an active educational program and a world-class biomedical research center. As a nonprofit institution, Maine Medical Center provides nearly 23 percent of all the charity care delivered in Maine. MMC is a member of the MaineHealth system, a growing family of health care services in northern New England. For more information, visit www.mmc.org.