

Friday February 5, 2010

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

*For more information
contact:*

Michael Mazza
Chief Executive Officer
519 245-5295 ext. 5592

We're not Out of Hot Water – yet!

An on-going issue with poor hot water circulation at the Strathroy hospital of the Middlesex Hospital Alliance (MHA) is now getting tackled head-on.

“This hot water situation is not new, we inherited it from previous administrations. While it is annoying and inconvenient – other more pressing matters have come ahead of it. But it is also a situation that we are now able to tackle,” Mike Mazza, CEO of the MHA, says.

MHA’s own Environmental Services department has done a thorough job of internal troubleshooting on the issue. “Our investigation indicates that it is a challenge of circulation, not water quantity,” Paul Long, Chief Financial Officer at the MHA, says. According to Long the “hot water project” was scheduled for the last quarter of 2009/10 and has received \$50,000 infrastructure funding from the SouthWest Local Health Integration Network.

Now, the administration will consult with the mechanical engineering firm Vanderwesten and Rutherford Associates Inc., which was the contractor that worked on the additional infrastructure in the ambulatory / emergency department expansion a few years ago. Their study will result in an Action Plan to ensure hot water is delivered wherever it is required in the hospital.

How did Strathroy inherit this dilemma? The problem is not uncommon in older buildings with old renovations. When two floors were added to the original 2-storey Strathroy hospital, in the early 1970s, the existing infrastructure was not up to the additional size.

Until an Action Plan is developed that can improve this issue, many departments – especially nursing, housekeeping and environmental services – have developed a number of “work-arounds” to cope. “We certainly appreciate the cooperation of staff in our on-going investigations and in developing strategies to deal with this inconvenience,” Long says.

Mike Mazza, CEO of the MHA says, “We greatly appreciate the understanding of our patients as we work towards a solution.” And, he adds, “This is an inconvenience, but it is not a safety issue.” It is important to note that there is no hygiene issue here. Hot water is not used clinically to fight microbes in hand hygiene. The MHA continues to have generally low infection rates.