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*For more information
contact:*

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Nancy Maltby
Chief Operations Officer
519 245-5295 ext. 5506

Hospital Surgical Wait Time Volume Targets Exceeded

Strathroy, ON - The Middlesex Hospital Alliance (MHA) has met and exceeded wait-time target volumes for a number of surgical procedures during its 2011-2012 operating year.

In a report detailed by the MHA's finance department, Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital (SMGH) utilized all but approximately \$25,000 of 1.5 million available wait time funding dollars - all while meeting and exceeding the majority of general surgical procedure volumes and all of Total Joint Replacements and Cataracts. In some cases the MHA provided surplus operational funds to pay for certain procedures driven by demand for patient surgery volumes above and beyond the wait time funding allocation provided by the South West Local Health Integration Network (SW LHIN).

Overall, the MHA exceeded volumes at 109% of the total funded surgical volumes completed.

Procedures include hip and knee total joint replacements, cataracts, hernia repairs, gallbladder removal, and bowel and intestinal related surgeries.

Provincial wait time targets for these surgeries, along with cancer related procedures (breast and bowel, urology, thyroid), are all areas of concern for the SW LHIN. Specifically, the targets require that patients who need these procedures, get them within six and a half months of determining the need for surgery. The wait time target for oncology cases must be within three months.

The MHA's wait times all meet or exceed SW LHIN provincial targets with the exception of hip and knee revision surgery because of increased demand and volume of referrals from hospitals throughout the region. For oncology cases including breast, colorectal, endocrine (including thyroid) and urology cases, the MHA wait times are half of the Provincial target of 84 days - performing cancer related procedures within 6 weeks as compared to the provincial target of three months.

Wait time funding for surgical procedures is currently provided by the SW LHIN as one time funding for surgical volumes in addition to a hospital's base funding.

The move to the new patient-based funding model was announced by the provincial government last month to be phased in over the next three years; it could help SMGH perform even more joint replacement and general surgery procedures in the future.

Hospital spokesperson Nancy Maltby said the new patient-based funding model will help keep the MHA focused on shortening surgical wait times further.

"We remain committed to improving access and shortening wait times for surgical procedures," said Nancy Maltby, Chief Operating Officer, Middlesex Hospital Alliance.

"The MHA is poised to meet and exceed surgical volumes that the government allocated for us this year, and while unfortunately there is no funding for surgical volumes that we exceed, we look forward to working together on the new funding model so that patients can get the right care when they need it."

With the addition of a new general surgeon, Dr. Vipin Jain, the MHA was able to achieve significant growth in terms of meeting and exceeding funded volumes across most general surgery procedures.

At this point, the MHA expects to exceed all of the general surgical funded volumes for 2012-13 given that Dr. Jain has only been practicing since last August.

"The MHA is quickly becoming the destination of choice for general surgery in addition to our full complement of emergency, acute, diagnostic and other treatment options for the communities that we serve," added Maltby.