

*Manitoba Health, Healthy Living & Seniors (MHLS) supports reporting and learning from patient safety events. The focus of a patient safety review is to closely look at the health care system that surrounds and interacts with those giving and receiving care. The goal is to identify risks to patient safety and recommend the most effective ways to minimize risk and improve the delivery of healthcare.*

## **Patient Safety Learning Advisory**

### **Summary:**

An elderly patient had surgery to repair a fractured hip. Five days after the surgery, the patient developed a distended abdomen and fever.

An initial assessment by the physician suggested an infection following surgery. The following morning the patient was found to have a perforated viscus.

Surgery was performed. The patient was discharged home a number of months later.

### **Keywords:**

Abdominal distention, fever, sepsis, perforated viscus

**Device Name (if applicable):**

**Drug/Name/Fluid Name: (if applicable):**

**Type of Analysis:** single event

**Topic:** Care Management

**Findings of the Review:**

The attending physician was away from the site when the event occurred. An alternate physician was not identified as providing coverage during this absence.

Staff was uncertain about how long to continue attempting to reach the attending physician. When unable to reach the physician, they were not clear who was to provide coverage.

**Recommendations for Improvement:**

Reinforce the importance of an attending surgeon providing alternate physician coverage when away/unavailable.

Reinforce with the nursing staff the option of the staff contacting the "on call" surgeon or the Medical Manager of Surgery, if unable to reach an attending physician.

Consider the development of a rapid response team to expedite patient assessment.

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