

May 25, 2010

**TO: All Residents of Leader, Burstall, Mendham, Richmond, Lancer, Prelate,  
Fox Valley, Sceptre, Liebenthal, Eatonia**

**RE: TEMPORARY DISRUPTION OF SERVICES – Leader Hospital; Effective May 31, 2010**

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The following is intended to provide you with more information regarding the Leader Hospital and the 'temporary disruption of services' that the facility will be facing, effective May 31, 2010 at 8:00 am. This 'temporary disruption' will cause a change in the programs and services offered at the Hospital – it does NOT mean that the Hospital is closed.

The temporary disruption is necessary due to the current shortage of emergency on-call physician services. It will be in effect until further notice – once additional physician coverage is secured, a return to full services will be announced as appropriate.

During the disruption, some services at the Leader Hospital **WILL NOT BE** available:

- No Emergency Room Services Available
- No Admissions Available
- No Physician or Nurse Practitioner On-Call Services Available
- Hospital services will NOT be available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week

The following services **WILL BE** available:

- Hospital building will be open from 8:30 am – 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday only.
- Only previously booked NON-EMERGENT outpatient services will be available – dressing changes, blood pressure checks, B12 shots, etc. In addition, regular booked treatments will continue to be seen – if you are concerned about a regular booked procedure that has been done in the past, please contact the Hospital to discuss your specific situation.
- Lab and X-ray services will be available from 8:30 am – 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday, for previously booked or physician/Nurse Practitioner ordered tests.
- EMS (ambulance) staffing will be enhanced to provide 2 ambulance crews, as frequently as possible. The daytime EMS staff will be stationed on-site at the Hospital building to reduce the response time in event of an emergency.
- All other health services, including long term care at Western Senior Citizen's Home, home care, community health programming, and emergency medical services (that is, Leader Ambulance) will continue to be available and will be unaffected by the disruption.

The following services **WILL BE** available (continued):

Appointments to see a Physician or Nurse Practitioner (NP) at the Leader Primary Health Care Clinic will continue to be available Monday to Friday.

- Nurse Practitioner – will be available at the Leader Clinic on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and limited availability on Friday. She will be in Eatonia on Wednesday of each week.
- Dr. Palangi – will be available at Leader Clinic on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. He will be joined by a Maple Creek physician one day of each week.
- A focus on access to Physician/NP appointments at the Clinic will be emphasized. Cypress Health is attempting to secure additional permanent and/or locum (temporary) physicians to join the Clinic staff.

## **QUESTION AND ANSWERS**

### **Question – *What should I do in the event of an emergency?***

**Answer:** As per regular practice, you should always call 9-1-1 if you are faced with a medical emergency. EMS staff will be immediately dispatched and will transfer you to the nearest emergency room service while providing the emergency care you need. Leader EMS will be assisted by neighbouring EMS sites when required.

Emergency services will continue to be provided by EMS staff during the disruption – an emergency room service will not be available.

### **Question – *If I have to be transferred by ambulance to another facility where will I be sent?***

**Answer:** The health provider team, including EMS, will assess the specific health needs of each client and will determine the most appropriate facility for that client to be transferred to. The closest acute care facilities are located in Kindersley, Maple Creek, Swift Current and Medicine Hat (Alberta).

### **Question – *What should I do if I have a non-emergent health need or question?***

**Answer:** Appointments to see a Physician or Nurse Practitioner can be made by calling ahead to the Leader Clinic during business hours Monday to Friday. Just a reminder – if in a health emergency situation, do not go to the Clinic ... call 9-1-1. PLEASE DO NOT phone directly to the Physician or NP's house, or try to ask them health-related questions away from their office.

The provincial HealthLine is available 24 hours per day and can be called toll-free at 1-877-800-0002 to speak to a registered nurse regarding non-emergency health questions. They can also provide advice and help you to decide if you should call 9-1-1 to access an ambulance or go to the nearest hospital emergency room. Their service can also be accessed online at [www.healthlineonline.ca](http://www.healthlineonline.ca).

If you have a Medical Emergency

**CALL 911**

***HealthLine***

**1-877-800-0002**  
[www.healthlineonline.ca](http://www.healthlineonline.ca)

**Question - *Why can't emergency services be provided by the nursing staff at the Hospital?***

**Answer:** As per the Sask. Registered Nurses Association (SRNA) website's 'Ask A Practice Advisor' bulletin from March 2008 ...

*"If it is determined that the health care facility can no longer provide the services that the relevant legislation requires, the facility has no choice but to discontinue providing emergency services. In the event that a client does appear at the emergency room entrance, basic first aid and nursing care that does not require a physician's order can be provided. Transport to the nearest emergency department should be arranged as soon as possible. RNs are not able to provide advanced emergency services without working collaboratively with a physician."*

Thus, in emergency situations, nurses can provide first aid and work with EMS. However, in non-emergent situations, nurses can assess, counsel and treat some conditions along with support from the NP and/or physicians. Nurses cannot diagnose or prescribe but can carry out a wide range of other treatments and activities. RNs do not practice independently in emergency rooms and thus cannot provide the full scope of services that would be provided in an emergency room setting.

**Question – *Why can't people be admitted to the Leader Hospital?***

**Answer:** During the temporary disruption, there will be no acute admissions to the Hospital's inpatient beds. Without a consistent supply of physician on-call services available, this service can't be available as hospital inpatients have to be able to access a physician if required.

**Question – *Without consistent physician services in the Town, who will look after the long term care residents at Western Senior Citizen's Home?***

**Answer:** The long term care residents will continue to be cared for by the existing staff, who will have access to physician consultation and support when required. As well, home care staff will also have access to a physician when required for client care needs.

**Question – *What is being done to bring more physicians to the community?***

**Answer:** Efforts have been ongoing by the Leader Physician Recruitment Committee and Cypress Health to recruit additional physicians to Leader, and bring the total number of practicing physicians to three in addition to the one existing Nurse Practitioner. In addition to Dr. Palangi's recent recruitment, two other physicians had agreed to join the Primary Health Care team. One of these has unfortunately had to withdraw her interest due to immigration process issues with a family member. The second physician, Dr. Hoque, continues to finalize his immigration/licensure requirements and is hoping to join the community as soon as he can.

Cypress Health has received approval from the Ministry of Health to recruit a temporary second Nurse Practitioner to join the Clinic team. Efforts have been started to recruit another NP to assist the community's medical access needs – however, these positions are difficult to recruit and results may not be immediate.

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[www.healthlineonline.ca](http://www.healthlineonline.ca)

**Question – *Is this service disruption a step towards the closure of the Leader Hospital?***

**Answer:** No it is not. This measure has been put into place to address the current shortage of physicians in the community who are able to provide emergency on-call services. Currently, Dr. Palangi is the only physician practicing in the community and he is in the midst of doing what is necessary to fulfill his licensure requirements with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and is not able to provide emergency on-call coverage during the disruption.

Once additional licensed physicians have been recruited to the community, the Leader Hospital will return to a full slate of acute care services including emergency outpatient service and admissions.

The Town of Leader, surrounding rural municipal councils, and Cypress Health have submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Health for a new integrated health facility in Leader. This facility would see all health services (acute, long term care, home care, community health, EMS, primary health care) located under one roof. Although the project was not announced in the province's budget address, the group is exploring other funding options and is waiting for a response from the Ministry.

**Question – *Does this temporary reduction result in staff losing their jobs?***

**Answer:** No it will not. Staffing hours will be guaranteed for permanent full-time and part-time Hospital staff members, and there will be no loss of guaranteed hours of work. Some of the staff will be providing additional help at the Western Senior Citizen's Home or will be temporarily working at other neighbouring facilities within the health region.

**Question – *Where can I find updated information regarding temporary disruptions?***

**Answer:** Residents are encouraged to use several options to keep abreast of updates and other information regarding temporary disruptions:

- Visit Cypress Health's website at [www.cypresshealth.ca](http://www.cypresshealth.ca) and click on the 'Disruptions of Service' link on the home page. The direct website address is [www.cypresshealth.ca/disruptions.htm](http://www.cypresshealth.ca/disruptions.htm).
- Call Cypress Health's new 'Temporary Disruptions Information Line' toll-free at 1-888-461-7443, where a regularly-updated message is provided.
- Visit the Town of Leader's website at [www.leader.ca](http://www.leader.ca)
- Updates will be provided to the Leader News, The Badger, and Golden West radio stations in Kindersley and Swift Current.

THE LEADER HEALTH CARE TEAM AND CYPRESS HEALTH REGION  
APPRECIATE YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND PATIENCE DURING THIS  
ANTICIPATED LENGTHY TEMPORARY DISRUPTION.

Along with the Town of Leader and the residents of Leader/surrounding areas,  
we hope that the disruption will be short-lived and that the combined  
physician recruitment efforts are successful.

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**CALL 911**

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