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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
Date: May 19, 2010

TEMPORARY DISRUPTION OF SERVICES AT LEADER HOSPITAL

Due to a shortage of physicians, the Leader Hospital will be implementing a temporary disruption of services, effective Monday May 31st at 8:00 am. This temporary disruption will be in effect until further notice.

This temporary disruption of services will result in the Leader Hospital reducing its hours of operation and the services that it is able to provide.

As of May 31st at 8:00 am, acute care services that will not be provided until further notice include:

- Emergency outpatient services will not be available ('911' should be called for emergencies or proceed to nearest acute emergency outpatient department)
- Acute admissions will not be available
- Physician on-call services will not be available
- Hospital services will not be available on a 24 hour, 7 days per week basis.

The following services will be available at the Leader Hospital:

- Hospital building will be open from 8:30 am – 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday.
- Non-emergent, previously booked procedures will be provided – examples include dressing changes, B12 shots, and blood pressure checks. 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 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.

With this month's departure of two permanent physicians from the community, medical services at the Leader Primary Health Care Clinic will be provided by Dr. Palangi (a recently recruited physician) and Nurse Practitioner (NP) Mikki Millar.

- Dr. Palangi – in Leader Clinic on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
- NP Mikki Millar – in Leader Clinic on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. She will be visiting the Eatonia Clinic on Wednesdays.

As Dr. Palangi is currently in the College of Physicians and Surgeons' licensure and mentorship process, he will be joined one day per week by a member of the Maple Creek physician team. Appointments can be made to see a physician or the NP by calling the Clinic, as per usual practice.

Cypress Health is continuing to work with the Leader Physician Recruitment Committee in recruiting permanent and/or locum physicians to the community. The health region has proposed recruiting a second temporary Nurse Practitioner position to the Ministry of Health, which has been approved. Recruitment efforts for this second NP have already begun.

All other health services, including long term care, home care, community health programming, and emergency medical services (i.e. Leader Ambulance) will continue to be available to residents, and will be unaffected by this temporary reduction of services.

Cypress Health's Interim Chief Executive Officer Beth Vachon acknowledged the many efforts that have been made over the past several months in planning for the potential temporary disruption. "Once we were notified of the physicians' intentions to wind down their medical practices in Leader, our staff were looking ahead to the effects on the hospital's services. Discussions were held with the Leader staff, Town of Leader Council, physicians and other stakeholders, and a plan has been developed to address the revised service delivery in the community."

Although admitting that this scenario is not what anyone wishes to see happen, Vachon added that this temporary disruption may last for a longer period of time. "Without a minimum of two physicians in the community that are fully licensed by the College, it is very difficult to provide a consistent level of physician emergency on-call coverage at the hospital. However, we will continue to make every effort to return the facility to providing a full set of acute services as soon as possible."

Cypress Health has developed several means of providing up-to-date information regarding the temporary disruption at the Leader Hospital. The public are encouraged to visit the health region's disruption of services webpage at www.cypresshealth.ca/disruptions.htm or to access the region's new Temporary Disruption Information Line by calling toll-free 1-888-461-7443 on a regular basis to receive the most current information available.

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For more information or to arrange for interviews, please contact:

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