

Press Release

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SMH implements recommendations from Wyoming Department of Health

(Sheridan, Wyo.) For Immediate Release

During a November of 2011 Wyoming Department of Health Sheridan Memorial Hospital's surgical services department survey, it was determined that the Laryngeal Mask Airways (LMA), which are artificial airways, were not being autoclaved or steam-sterilized but were being scrubbed and processed through a washer sterilizer.

The process used to disinfect LMAs between surgical patients had been modified in May to include a thorough brush scrub, then they were placed in the washer sterilizer where they were cleaned with soap, enzymatic chemicals and heated to sterilization levels. The previous disinfection procedure did not include autoclaving. The Department of Health's requirement is based on manufacturer's recommended method of sterilization.

The Department of Health directed the hospital to change procedures to include steam autoclaving - an alternative process that uses steam under high pressure to disinfect and sterilize. SMH immediately implemented the new procedure, developed a procedure spreadsheet, and posted directions for the staff. The plan of correction was implemented that day and no further corrective actions were recommended by the state. If there are any further recommendations from the state, SMH would implement them immediately.

In addition to meeting the request of the Department of Health, SMH has taken further steps to ensure the safety and health of patients. The Central Sterilization staff has completed additional certified education and training in cleaning and disinfection, not something that is a requirement of the position, but implemented as an extra reassurance to patients. Additionally, Central Sterilization staff has completed an inventory of all surgical equipment, and created instrument specific binders outlining particular procedures based on manufacturer's recommendations for each surgical instrument.

According to hospital Chief of Staff, John Addlesperger, D.O., "The medical staff executive committee based on surgery department reports and consultation with the state Department of Health, believe that compliance with the state recommendations have been achieved and that any risk of infection to surgery patients prior to the change is very low."

There have been no infections or complications that have been reported in relation to this situation, and none are anticipated. However, any patients who may have had surgery between May and November of 2011 and might have questions or concerns can contact the hospital at 672-1197.

Sheridan Memorial Hospital places patient safety as its top priority. Hospital staff have several available reporting outlets and they are encouraged to report any patient safety concerns or potential safety risks through those venues, including an anonymous compliance hotline.

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