

Media Statement

Hospital addresses local concern over surgical technician

Phoenix, Ariz. – A surgical technician who is at the center of a case that led to communicable disease testing for patients of a Colorado hospital has been identified as a former employee of John C. Lincoln Medical Center, formerly known as North Mountain Hospital.

Employment records show that the surgical technician Rocky Allen worked in our hospital for less than two months, from July 28, 2014 to Sept. 26, 2014. He was terminated for violation of a workplace policy. It is important to note that the situation at our facility is different than the one in Colorado, and at this time, we have no indication there was harm to patients. However, because of the Colorado case, and in an abundance of caution, we are offering free hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV testing to any patient who had a surgery at John C. Lincoln Medical Center during the time this individual was employed — from July 28, 2014 to Sept. 26, 2014.

Although the likelihood that patients were exposed is extremely low, we will be contacting patients directly with instructions about testing. At this point we have no evidence of any patient exposure, but in the interest of patient safety, we're taking a position of extreme caution. Any patient who had surgery from July 28, 2014 to Sept. 26, 2014 at John C. Lincoln Medical Center, located at 250 E. Dunlap in Phoenix, can contact us at 623-580-5800. Our call center is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday – Friday, and 8 a.m. – 6 p.m., Saturday and Sunday.

As soon as we found out about the Colorado incident and became aware that Allen was our former employee, we immediately began looking into the matter. We are working in close collaboration with the Maricopa County Department of Public Health and the Arizona Department of Health Services. They support our proactive stance to address any potential issue.

Rebecca Sunenshine, MD, medical director for disease control for the Maricopa County Department of Public Health, provided the following comment: "The staff and physicians at John C. Lincoln Medical Center are doing the right thing for their patients. They immediately reached out to us about this matter, and we're collaborating with them, the Arizona Department of Health Services and the Centers for Disease Control to ensure patient safety."

We understand how unsettling this news is for our patients. We empathize with each person and their loved ones, and we are committed to providing appropriate support. Because of the situation in Colorado, we are taking action to ensure the well-being of our patients. Providing complimentary testing is the right thing to do.

The situation that happened here is an isolated, unfortunate situation. There is no evidence at this time that what happened in Colorado happened here. To ensure patient safety, we are conducting a comprehensive investigation and review of our policies and procedures related to controlled substances.

Any information about Allen's health information is protected under the federal Health Insurance Portability and Privacy Act.

We are deeply sorry to cause anxiety for the patients we cared for during this time period. We are committed to do all we can to address our patient's concerns throughout this process.

As we know more we will share updates at that time.

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