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## Hip and knee replacement services resuming at KBRH

TRAIL – Interior Health (IH) is pleased to announce that elective hip and knee total joint replacement surgeries for patients at Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital (KBRH) are resuming on Monday, Jan. 29.

These elective surgeries were put on hold late in 2017, based on concerns related to a slight increase in the number of surgical site infections in elective total joint replacement surgeries earlier last year. This led to a formal review of joint replacement surgical processes at the site, involving Interior Health and external specialists in infection prevention and control and surgical practices.

While a number of improvements were identified through this review, no specific cause for the increase in surgical site infections was identified through a thorough examination of the patient charts, KBRH surgical processes, or the operating room (OR) environment.

“There was no specific organism found in these cases or a specific item that we can point to and say, ‘That’s the problem.’ Given the wide variety of factors that can contribute to surgical site infections, we knew pinpointing a specific reason for the increased infections would be unlikely,” says Dr. Ron Cameron, KBRH perioperative medical director and a general surgeon at the hospital. “This review was valuable in that it allowed us to look at the patient’s surgical journey and examine the range of risks and make some improvements to our processes and to the ORs themselves.”

A Surgical Quality Working Group, which includes orthopedic surgeons, was established early in the review process to review and monitor ongoing surgical processes and practices at KBRH. Enhancements or improvements can be broken down into three general areas based on the review and surgical working group discussions:

1) OR physical environment – The on-site review by an external infection prevention and control practitioner provided a number of recommendations regarding the OR environment at KBRH. ***The filters for the OR air system have been upgraded to the current CSA standard for orthopedic surgeries. System upgrades also include real-time monitoring of air pressure and airflow in the ORs. The entire air system was thoroughly cleaned and rebalanced to ensure appropriate airflow through the ORs, and an updated maintenance schedule for the system is in place. Minor repairs to some surface areas are proceeding.***

2) Pre-surgical screening and the patient journey – The review determined that pre-surgical screening processes could be improved to identify and support patients at higher risk of infection. Evidence shows that infection risk is higher amongst patients who suffer from pre-existing conditions such as obesity, diabetes, or those who smoke.

***Based on the review, IH will enhance the triage process for patients awaiting total joint replacement surgeries, ensuring patients who are at higher risk of infection are identified and supported early in their journey to reduce those risk factors wherever possible. A tool identifying patient risks and recommended follow-up prior to surgery for those with significant risks is being implemented that will follow a patient from their initial visit with their family physician all the way through the surgical process, from pre-surgical screening to post-operative and community care. This will increase opportunities for consultations with internal medicine specialists, smoking cessation support, and/or connecting individuals with other IH clinicians such as dieticians,***

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**physiotherapists, or home care nurses, and give patients the greatest chance of success for their surgery and reduce their risk of infection.**

3) Surgical practices – The internal review by IH infection prevention and control practitioners highlighted current standards and best practices for preventing surgical site infections.

***IH Infection Prevention and Control is providing education and updated information to the surgical team related to current standards around items such as dosage for antibiotic prophylaxis prior to surgery.***

***IH will have a dedicated RN or coordinator based in the medical device reprocessing (equipment sterilization) department to enhance ongoing quality assurance and monitoring of those processes.*** Note: Audits of the KBRH medical device reprocessing unit have shown appropriate sterilization is taking place. This additional staff member is a proactive step to support the ongoing quality work in this department and is consistent with staffing at other surgical sites in IH.

Surgical processes for every total joint replacement surgery will be tracked and audited for ongoing quality assurance purposes, and any future surgical site infections in total joint replacement surgeries will be thoroughly reviewed.

In light of these steps, orthopedic surgeons and Interior Health have agreed to resume total hip and knee joint replacement cases later this month.

“We know a delay in these major surgeries do impact these patients and we regret that some individuals had to wait longer for their procedures. Above all, Interior Health and our local orthopedic surgeons took these actions to ensure our patients are receiving safe, quality care and have the greatest chance of a successful and safe procedure and recovery,” says Dr. Cameron.

IH is in process of contacting patients to book total hip and knee procedures. Those individuals whose surgeries were delayed will be reassessed as needed and rebooked as priority cases.