



August 28, 2013

Dear

I am writing to you because our records indicate that you were a patient in the colposcopy clinic at the Miramichi-Regional Hospital between 1999 and May 24, 2013. Our records show that you had a biopsy, using forceps, as part of your colposcopy procedure.

On May 24, 2013, Horizon Health Network discovered that the clinic had not followed recommended cleaning practices on forceps used for biopsies at the hospital's colposcopy clinic.

From 1999 to May 24, the cleaning and disinfection method used on colposcopy biopsy forceps involved either a high-level disinfection or sterilization. The recommendation is to sterilize the forceps; however the high-level disinfection process destroys 99.99 per cent of blood-borne pathogens such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV.

By not consistently following the recommended procedure of sterilization, we may have exposed some of our patients to a risk of infection. Once we discovered the error, we immediately corrected the process. As well, we consulted Horizon and external infection control physician experts to determine the potential risk of infection.

It is important to note that in this instance the risk of infection is extremely low. The estimated risk of contracting hepatitis B is 1 in 47,000 procedures; however the risk of becoming ill is 1 in 156,000 procedures. The risk of contracting hepatitis C or HIV is less than one in a million procedures when using high-level disinfection cleaning.

As a precaution, we are offering you the option to have a blood test for hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV.

While we are assured the risk of infection is extremely low, Horizon believes it is our responsibility to inform our patients of any potential exposure to risks. We understand this information could be very upsetting to you and we sincerely apologize for the error and assure you that your well-being is our main concern.

To assist you, we have included with this letter information sheets on hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV. Also included is a requisition for blood work, should you choose to have this completed.

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