



*Manitoba Health supports reporting and learning from patient safety events. The focus of a patient safety review is to closely look at the health care system that surrounds and interacts with those giving and receiving care. The goal is to identify risks to patient safety and recommend the most effective ways to minimize risk and improve the delivery of healthcare.*

## **Patient Safety Learning Advisory**

### **Delay in Cancer Referral**

**Summary:** A patient was referred by his/her family physician to a surgeon to have a colonoscopy performed for recurrent gastrointestinal symptoms (i.e. diarrhea and bloating, treated for H pyloric with no response, and a low hemoglobin). The purpose was for surveillance of prior colo-rectal cancer. The procedure was performed and pathology results were positive for invasive adenocarcinoma. There was a one month delay from the time of the pathology results and a referral to Cancer Care Manitoba (CCMB) for treatment.

**Keywords:** delay in referral, cancer treatment

This review is based on a single event.

#### **Findings of the Review:**

The surgeon performed an additional procedure based on the patient's past history. An incidental finding of cancer was diagnosed based on this additional procedure.

The cancer diagnosis and subsequent delay in referral to CCMB was impacted due to both the surgeon and the patient being away for two consecutive 2-week periods of time.

There is currently no formal process in place for management of test results in SH-SS when surgeons are away.

#### **Recommendations:**

- 1. Remind physicians through a memo to:**
  - have critical test results monitored when they are away for extended periods of time (anything over 2 weeks).**

- **If there is any suspicion of malignancy to send a referral/navigation consult to CCMB.**