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Headwaters conducts mock hostage-taking scenario with Dufferin police

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Patients at Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC) and residents living in the area may have noticed an increase in police presence at the hospital on Sunday morning, but have no reason to worry.

Headwaters Hospital and the Dufferin Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) were conducting a scheduled mock scenario at the local hospital on Sunday (Oct. 20) from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

?Mock emergency drills are very effective with emergency preparedness because it puts policy into practice,? reads a statement from the Headwaters Health Care Centre Emergency Preparedness Committee and Dufferin OPP. ?As a learning exercise, mock drills provide realistic stimuli, which sharpens our team's actual response according to hospital code policies. They also show us areas of improvement so that the hospital can continue to provide an environment of safety and high-quality care.?

Emergency codes and mock drills are part of Headwaters' regular emergency preparedness and planning.

?These hospital emergency codes are common among all Ontario hospitals and are used to quickly mobilize relevant teams to respond to the event and provide high-quality patient care and safety in an emergency situation.?

The emergency drills at Headwaters were focused on two of the hospital's standard emergency codes; code silver, which is a person with a weapon; and code purple, implemented in cases of hostage-taking.

?Code silver and code purple are unique in that they involve the emergency interagency response of local police and potentially other agencies. This year, the mock code silver was highly recommended by Accreditation Canada to Ontario hospitals, to ensure patients, staff, physicians and volunteers can be safe under the circumstances,? said the Headwaters Health Care Centre Emergency Preparedness Committee.

The mock code exercise included members of the Dufferin OPP and more than 50 hospital staff, volunteers, patient and family advisors and Dufferin County Paramedics who volunteered to participate or observe.

Representatives from three peer hospitals were also there to observe the mock scenario and apply the information gathered through the exercise to their own organizations.

Headwaters Hospital remained open during the mock exercise with all patient services and facilities fully operational and regular visiting hours in effect. There was no impact on patients during the mock exercise.