DATE: August 21, 2012

MEMORANDUM TO: Long-Term Care Home Administrators

FROM: Karen Slater  
Acting Director  
Performance Improvement and Compliance Branch

RE: Adult Hospital Beds: Patient Entrapment Hazards, Side Rail Latching Reliability, and Other Hazards

Health Canada is notifying hospitals and other health-care facilities, including Long-Term Care (LTC) Homes, about the continued risk of entrapment of patients/residents using hospital-type beds. This notification can be found at: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/medeff/advisories-avis/prof/_2012/hospital_bed-lit_hopital_2_nth-aah-eng.php.


In order to reduce the risk of bed-related resident entrapment in LTC Homes, Health Canada recommends the following:

• “Institutions that still use Stryker FL14E1 beds or other beds manufactured prior to the year 2000 are advised to contact the manufacturer for advice on reducing entrapment hazards. Many manufacturers offer covers which fit over the gap between split side rails. Such covers are a simple and economical option for reducing the risk of entrapment.

• Institutions should verify that replacement mattresses are the correct size for the bed frame.”

In addition to the Health Canada notice, I would also like to direct your attention to the regulatory requirements related to bedrails found in section 15 of the Ontario Regulation 79/10 of the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, proclaimed into force on July 1, 2010:

…/2
Bed rails

15. (1) Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that where bed rails are used:
(a) the resident is assessed and his or her bed system is evaluated in accordance with evidence-based practices and, if there are none, in accordance with prevailing practices, to minimize risk to the resident;
(b) steps are taken to prevent resident entrapment, taking into consideration all potential zones of entrapment; and
(c) other safety issues related to the use of bed rails are addressed, including height and latch reliability. O. Reg. 79/10, s. 15 (1).

(2) Subsection (1) applies in addition to any requirements that apply where bed rails are used as a physical device to restrain under section 31 of the Act or as a PASD under section 33 of the Act. O. Reg. 79/10, s. 15 (2).

The risk of entrapment of residents in hospital-type beds is of such a critical nature; please ensure that your organization follows the Health Canada recommendations and complies with the regulatory requirements to ensure the safety of residents in your LTC Home.

Original signed by
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Karen Slater

C: Rachel Kampus, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, MOHLTC
  Candace Chartier, CEO, OLTCA
  Debbie Humphries, Acting CEO, OANHSS
  Nancy Cooper, Director of Policy and Professional Development, OLTCA
  Kathryn Pilkington, Director of Professional Services & Health Policy, OANHSS
  Dr. Andrew McCallum, Chief Coroner for Ontario