



## Carolinan HealthCare System

Dear Sir or Madam,

Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have noted clusters of patients nationwide who have developed a rare infection caused by a bacteria called *Mycobacterium chimaera*, a slow-growing species of nontuberculous mycobacteria, following surgeries that used heater-cooler machines to maintain blood temperature. The surgeries that use these machines include open-heart surgeries, and some vascular and liver transplant surgeries.

While these infections are very rare, in the interest of your safety and transparency, Carolinas HealthCare System wanted to ensure that you were aware of this issue and provide additional resources should you have any questions or concerns. To date, none of our facilities who utilize these heater cooler machines have had any cardiac, liver transplant or vascular surgical patients with a *Mycobacterium chimaera* infection, however, provider and patient vigilance for signs and symptoms of this and other atypical mycobacterial infections is essential.

Our records indicate that, during the past four years, you or a member of your family had surgery at Carolinas HealthCare System that may have included a heater-cooler machine.

This kind of infection is very slow growing and can be difficult to diagnose. It is possible to develop symptoms months after surgery, so it is important to know what symptoms to look for. Please discuss any symptoms or questions you may have with your surgeon, cardiologist or primary care doctor. The infection cannot be spread person to person.

Symptoms include:

- Unexplained fever
- Night sweats
- Unintentional weight loss
- Excessive fatigue
- Signs of infection at your surgical site such as redness, warmth or increased drainage/pus

We understand that you and your family might have additional questions or concerns about this information. We have included some frequently asked questions related to this issue as well as a letter to take to your primary care provider at your next visit so that they are aware of this issue.

To further address any questions you may have, we have established a hotline at **704-512-5700**. You can also find more information on the Carolinas Healthcare System website: [www.carolinashealthcare.org/NTM](http://www.carolinashealthcare.org/NTM).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'VPC'.

Vincent P. Casingal, MD  
Chief, Division of Abdominal Transplant  
Carolinas HealthCare System