

NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

HALIFAX REGIONAL LIMITS NARCOTIC PRESCRIPTIONS

ROANOKE RAPIDS, NC (December 30, 2010)—Halifax Regional is trying to meet the needs of all patients at the Emergency Care Center by changing its approach to caring for patients with chronic pain.

Physicians are more likely now to prescribe alternatives to narcotics for individuals who have multiple visits to the Emergency Care Center seeking relief from chronic pain.

Physicians will prescribe medications based on their assessment of patients, said Charlotte Ferguson, RN, manager of the Emergency Care Center.

“We treat all patients with compassion and want to help ease their pain,” Ferguson continued. “But we will use alternatives to narcotics when possible.”

There were approximately 40,000 visits to the Emergency Care Center last year. “Our priority is to serve patients with unexpected illnesses or injuries that are serious,” Ferguson noted.

“We ask that patients with chronic pain see their physicians and plan ahead so they will have sufficient medication,” she said.

Physicians and nurses are required to follow this policy, which has been adopted by the Board of Halifax Regional. “I hope patients will accept this change and see their own physicians to make plans to treat chronic pain,” Ferguson added.

Once a patient receives a prescription in North Carolina, pharmacists record it in a statewide database. Halifax Regional has access to the database.

Throughout the State, hospital emergency departments now have access to prescription drugs, so this situation can be monitored easily.

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About Halifax Regional

Halifax Regional Medical Center is licensed for 204 beds, including psychiatric and nursery. A non-profit organization, Halifax Regional is fully accredited by the Joint Commission. For more information, visit www.halifaxregional.org.