

## Update on Lake Tahoe Surgery Center Survey

South Lake Tahoe - Major improvements have taken place at the Lake Tahoe Surgery Center, after the results of a survey conducted by federal and state health inspectors revealed multiple deficiencies in medication practices.

The surgery center, of which the Barton HealthCare System purchased majority ownership in March, was closed for three days in April after a surprise inspection. Several injection safety issues were cited. At no time was there any danger or incidence of cross contamination between patients nor any patient infection that resulted from the practice concerns.

"We're taking these deficiencies very seriously and are forging ahead full force to make major improvements in medication and patient procedures, staff training and surgery center protocols that will exceed required standards," said Kathy Cocking, Vice President of Operations, Barton HealthCare Systems.

Barton's corrective plan of action was submitted to the Department of Health & Human Services. Since reopening on April 18, additional skilled staff has been hired to assist with staff training and monitoring to insure that new protocols are being met on a patient by patient basis. Barton has called upon its expert resources to assist in implementing the new stricter protocols.

"We are proud of the stellar quality of physicians, skilled clinical personnel and medical practices that are now in place at the Lake Tahoe Surgery Center," said John Williams, Barton's CEO.

"We do take these surveys very seriously and while we are making major improvements at the Lake Tahoe Surgery Center, we are also mindful everyday that patient safety is always first. While we have our improvement experts in house, we're taking a good hard look at all of our patient safety protocols throughout our healthcare system just for good measure," Williams added.

Despite the deficiencies found in April, the Lake Tahoe Surgery Center's infection control rate always has been and continues to be "less than one half of that of the national rate found at free-standing surgery centers," according to Cocking.

Minority ownership of the surgery center remains with a group of local physicians.