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Contact: Ember Davis, Drew Memorial Hospital Director of Marketing
(870) 460-4871
edavis@drewmemorial.org

PORT PILLOW CHALLENGE SEES HIGH PARTICIPATION

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Over the last month, Drew Memorial Hospital expected to receive a few dozen “port pillows,” homemade cushions that allows cancer patients to protect their treatment ports from rubbing against seatbelts while driving in a car.

The Port Pillow Challenge was launched July 18 and lasted until August 19. Inspired by the North Carolina nonprofit Port Pillows, staff at DMH wanted to offer a way for Southeast Arkansas residents to reach out to local cancer patients. The plan was to receive enough port pillows to offer them to each of the Cancer Care Center’s regular patients, allowing them more comfortable travel to and from their treatments and ensuring seatbelts are worn properly. The month-long challenge far exceeded their expectations. “We were so impressed by the number of people and organizations who participated. We received 27 port pillows in just the first week of the challenge,” said Lauren Case, director of the Cancer Care Center at DMH.

“We weren’t sure that a summertime challenge would result in a huge turnout, because lots of families take vacation and people want to get ready for back-to-school. But ultimately, it was amazing. We had 322 pillows donated by the end of the challenge!” Case said. “We are so grateful to everyone who took part. Thank you!”

All DMH Cancer Care Center patients will be offered a free port pillow, but they are also available to the public. Any Southeast Arkansas cancer patients, regardless of where they receive treatment, are welcome to contact the Cancer Care Center to receive a port pillow as well. To receive a pillow, call (870) 460-3583 to talk with cancer center staff. If you’d like to see the pattern to create your own port pillows, or learn more about the national organization’s mission, visit www.portpillows.com.

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