

## Press Release

Issued 17 April 2007

### New Defibrillators for the Royal United Hospital

The hospital Friends of the RUH have donated a magnificent £360,000 to purchase 60 new, state-of-the-art defibrillators. The defibrillators will be used in all clinical areas of the hospital.

Defibrillators deliver a high voltage shock to the heart which can restore an abnormal heart rhythm back to normal. They are the singular most important item of equipment in saving peoples lives after a cardiac arrest (when the heart suddenly stops working).

The new defibrillators will have different capabilities to meet the new UK resuscitation guidelines and are more efficient. Combined with the new basic life support guidelines, which have already been implemented, the new defibrillators should improve the chances of recovery after cardiac arrest.

Lead intensive therapy unit (ITU) clinician and consultant anaesthetist Jerry Nolan says: "We are absolutely delighted that the League of Friends agreed to fund these state-of-the-art defibrillators.

"The new defibrillators are shock advisory, which means that they explain to ward staff what needs to be done. The defibrillator analyses the heart rhythm and advises on the correct course of treatment. This means that staff can deliver an electric shock to the heart straight away, without waiting for a doctor to arrive. These defibrillators also charge up rapidly, which enables a shock to be given quickly. The faster a shock can be given, the more likely it is to be effective.

"Having the same model of defibrillator across all clinical areas will ensure consistency; training will be simplified and staff will be familiar with the equipment wherever they happen to be working."

On average the RUH has around one call per day to the cardiac arrest team. These new defibrillators enable the patient to receive improved care before the arrival of the team. They will also enable patients to be monitored in the acute phase of an illness leading to more immediate treatment in the event of a cardiac arrest.

Thomas White from Bristol had a cardiac arrest whilst attending a routine appointment at the hospital earlier this year. Thomas says: "I am so pleased that the RUH has been able to buy the new defibrillators. Without this vital equipment and the excellent care of the cardiac arrest team, I wouldn't be here today. My wife and I can't praise the staff highly enough for all their care, then and afterwards, we are

indebted to them. They performed a miracle as far as we are concerned. We'd like to say a special thank you to Dr Mansfield and Dr Kirsten for their care and attention."

Chairman of the Hospital Friends Tessa Berridge says: "The Friends were seeking to finance some urgently needed medical equipment, during our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year. We were delighted to respond to the request for the life-saving defibrillators, which will be placed in every ward. This is one more thing for the Friends to celebrate in supporting the dedicated care given to patients in the RUH."

## **Ends**

**Photo opportunity:** A photo opportunity has been arranged for Wednesday 18 April at 10.00am.

There will also be an opportunity for radio interviews during Wednesday morning. Please contact Anita in the communications office.

**For more information please contact:**

Anita Houlding, communication officer, telephone 01225 825799