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Media Release

RUH outlines priorities for patients

The Royal United Hospital has outlined its top five priorities for patients in 2012/13, focusing upon efficiency, feeling welcome, and being safely cared for.

Our top priority is to continue our strong track record in significantly reducing infections acquired within the hospital, particularly the superbugs such as MRSA and *Clostridium difficile*.

We are also setting out to improve our care for patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). Patients who suffer from this debilitating disease experience progressively worsening breathlessness which is commonly interspersed with periods requiring acute hospital admission. At the RUH we have around 500 admissions per year for COPD exacerbations.

We also recognise that many patients who are nearing the end of their lives spend considerable amounts of time in our hospital. As a priority we intend to explore how we can improve the quality of care for this group of patients and their loved ones. We need to determine how to provide greater support and training for staff in managing the emotional difficulties faced in caring for the dying.

Our staff are working hard to improve urinary continence care and we have identified this as another priority in 2012/13. We know that our patients who experience urinary incontinence often endure physical and emotional distress. Good continence care maintains health and wellbeing, improves dignity, reduces the likelihood of skin problems potentially leading to pressure ulcers, thereby improving the quality of daily life for our patients.

The fifth priority is promoting our learning across what is a large and complex organisation with a focus on caring. We are particularly keen to ensure that where mistakes and complaints do occur that we can actively learn from these and share this learning with our staff, patients and their families.

Director of Nursing Francesca Thompson says: "We continue in our total commitment to reduce healthcare associated infections and are very pleased with the low incidence of patients having an infection in their blood stream caused by MRSA after admission to our hospital – just one case this year.

“This year has been our second successive year in achieving our locally-agreed targets for superbugs and we have surpassed national expectations as a clean and infection-free hospital.

“We are proud of the quality improvements we have made at the RUH and we strive to keep on getting better and delivering safe, effective care to all of our patients. Focusing on the priorities we have identified will make real differences to our patients.”

Further information about our priorities and performance last year can be found in the RUH’s recently published *Quality Accounts*, which outlines the progress we have made in improving quality.

Notes to editors

Our five priorities are:

- to further reduce our healthcare associated infection rates
- to improve the pathway of care for patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- promoting organisational learning
- improving urinary continence care
- improving the experience of patients at the end of their life.

The RUH’s Quality Accounts 2011/12 can be found online on NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk) or on our own website at www.ruh.nhs.uk

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