New automated pharmacy launched at Morriston Hospital

Morriston Hospital in Swansea is the latest hospital to benefit from a state-of-the-art automatic pharmacy that will help improve safety, reduce dispensing errors and free up staff to spend more time on wards.

Health Minister Dr Brian Gibbons will today [Thursday, 14 September] officially launch the new system. It brings the total of automated dispensing systems in Wales to nine with four more being installed in hospitals across Wales by the end of next year, thanks to further investment from the Welsh Assembly Government.

Dr Gibbons said:

The automated system will give staff more time to spend with patients and will help improve patient safety by reducing the risk of harm from medication errors.

Evidence from the roll-out of the automated pharmacies in hospitals in Carmarthen, Llandough and Bodelwyddan has already shown that they have been very effective. They have helped free up staff time and increased the speed at which medicine is dispensed to patients.

Our 10-year strategy to create a world-class health service, Designed for Life, highlights the importance of embracing new ideas, like this system, to help improve the way we deliver services and help patients manage their conditions.

The Assembly Government is committed to modernising pharmacy services in Wales and this is the latest step in improving the hospital pharmacy service for the benefit of patients and staff.

Cheryl Davies, Chief Pharmacist from Swansea NHS Trust, added:

The introduction of automation at Morriston Hospital has completely revolutionized the way we work and has provided a much improved, calmer working environment. It has reduced our turnaround time for both inpatient and outpatient requests and released pharmacy time to provide a more patient focused medicines management service at ward level. Staff are able to spend more time with our patients explaining how and why they take their medicines and answer any questions they might have.

We are extremely grateful to the Welsh assembly Government for providing support and funding for this exciting development.

Notes:

The Health Minister will officially launch the automated pharmacy at Morriston Hospital,
Swansea on Thursday, 14 September at 2pm.

In January 2002 the then Health Minister Jane Hutt announced that the Assembly Government was providing funding for automated pharmacy systems.

The equipment at Morriston Hospital was the seventh system to be installed in Wales since 2003.

They were initially installed in the West Wales General Hospital in Carmarthen, Ysbyty Glan Clwyd in Bodelwyddan and Llandough, Cardiff. These systems were purchased on operating lease.

Changes to capital expenditure rules altered this approach for subsequent phases to capital purchase of the machines. A capital allocation of £1.333million to fund the subsequent phases has been made each year since.

Machines have now been successfully installed at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend, Royal Glamorgan Hospital, Llantrisant, the Royal Gwent Hospital, Newport, Prince Phillip Hospital, Llanelli, University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff and Morriston Hospital, Swansea.

Thursday, 14 September, 2006