



CMO puts patient safety at the top of the healthcare agenda

22 March 2007: This month, more than 70 healthcare specialists and MPs attended an All-Party Parliamentary Group on Patient Safety meeting at the House of Commons to discuss and debate patient safety for the year ahead.

The meeting, *Safety First: An Overview of Patient Safety in 2007*, was chaired by Dr Howard Stoate MP. Speakers included Sir Liam Donaldson, Chief Medical Officer and Lord Naren Patel, Chair of the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA).

The meeting provided an opportunity for Sir Liam Donaldson to set the wider context of *Safety First*, a report he commissioned and published in December 2006, to reconsider the organisation arrangements currently in place to ensure that patient safety is at the heart of the healthcare agenda.

The Chief Medical Officer addressed the meeting by outlining four key areas that needed to be addressed in order to improve patient safety within the NHS.

A focused engagement of frontline staff so that safety procedures become everyday routine and a simplified incident reporting system, were outlined as areas that needed to be improved upon. This was coupled with developing effective solutions to safety incidents and the active involvement of patients in devising safer procedures.

Through addressing these four key areas Sir Liam Donaldson said:

"It would make the context of patient safety a reality."

Lord Naren Patel, also addressed the meeting and in response to the key points set out in *Safety First*, stated that the NPSA had to:

"Strive to establish a culture of patient safety, right across the NHS. A blame free culture that encourages the open and effective reporting of safety incidents in a timely fashion, ensuring that such incidents are learnt from and do not happen again."

Sir Liam Donaldson, also spoke in his role as Chair of the WHO's World Alliance on Patient Safety, giving an insight into what steps are currently being carried out worldwide to ensure the safety of patients.

Sir Liam Donaldson said:

"The UK is a leading light in the field of patient safety with an enthusiastic approach to addressing the issues. However, there are areas that need to be focused upon to ensure the long-term safety of NHS patients".

Chair, Dr Howard Stoate MP commented:

"Patient Safety rightly remains a priority across the NHS and the work carried out in the UK is encouraging. However, what is important now is to ensure that this momentum is maintained and that such issues remain at the top of the political agenda."

Ends

For further information please contact Daniel Mosely:

(020) 7618 9100, patientsafety@luther.co.uk or visit: www.patient-safety.org.uk

Notes to editors:

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Patient Safety was set up in March 2005. It is the first parliamentary group to look specifically at patient safety. The Group aims to meet several times a year and examine various topics to enhance awareness of patient safety not only within Parliament, but also throughout the wider healthcare arena.