

Wednesday, 6 September 2006

VICTORIA LEADS THE WAY IN WORLD-FIRST TRAUMA TRIAL

In a world-first medical trial, doctors and nurses will be guided by prompts on a 'superscreen' to help reduce the number of Victorians dying as a result of trauma, Health Minister Bronwyn Pike said today.

Ms Pike said the \$1.6 million project at The Alfred hospital, is a 33-month pilot program using Victorian custom-designed software to guide medical staff during the all-important 30 minutes of reception and resuscitation.

"We know that the first 30 minutes for a trauma patient is the most crucial and this project will help reduce human error when treating a critically ill patient," Ms Pike said.

She emphasised that the system does not replace the expertise of emergency doctors and nurses.

"But experts believe there are life-saving benefits in giving the stabilisation process an added support in what are invariably complex and time-critical situations," Ms Pike said.

"In addition, the system offers a specialist the ability to step into a busy trauma bay and immediately obtain a snapshot of the patient's situation.

"The Alfred treats almost half of Victoria's 1855 major trauma patients a year.

"The Trauma Reception and Resuscitation Project is just another example of Victorian public hospitals offering the absolute best in emergency and trauma care, treatment and research."

Director of The Alfred's Emergency and Trauma Centre, Associate Professor Mark Fitzgerald said the trial could set a new benchmark for the treatment of trauma patients around the world.

"At the core of the system are clinical algorithms – which are a series of steps for conducting treatment – these steps were developed by more than 30 Alfred medical and nursing staff across a number of specialisations," A/Prof Fitzgerald said.

"Once a trauma patient has been admitted, the large 40-inch LCD screen on the wall of the trauma bay prompts medical staff on the next step of care needed to stabilise the patient.

"It also displays patient information such as time of arrival, type of injury and vital signs.

"There is little margin for error when treating a trauma patient, so one of the project's primary aims is to standardise the elements of care when dealing with a trauma so that we can ultimately reduce the likelihood of error."

The Victorian Trauma Foundation (VTF) and Bayside Health have jointly funded the project, with the software developed by Swinburne University. VTF is a not-for-profit organisation that is committed to saving and improving lives through research and development. It is mainly funded through the Transport Accident Commission.

Media contact: Ben Hart on 9651 5799 or 0407 445 551 www.vic.gov.au