

09 December 2009 - Health Minister visits site of New Acute Hospital in Enniskillen

Health Minister Michael McGimpsey has visited the site of the new acute hospital for the South West to see how construction is progressing.

Construction at the £270million development is now six months into a three-year construction programme that will see the hospital opening in 2012.

The Minister viewed works starting on the construction of the frame for the 65,000m² hospital building following the site preparation work.

Minister McGimpsey congratulated the Western Health and Social Care Trust and appointed contractor Northern Ireland Health Group on the substantial progress to date.

He said: "Since my last visit to the site six months ago there has been tremendous progress, which I have seen on site today. It is very clear that construction is now well underway to deliver the new £270million Acute Hospital for the people of the southwest.

"This new acute hospital will make a real difference to the health and social care services in the Western Trust area when it opens in 2012. The local community is already benefiting from the project in these tough economic times with a significant number of subcontracts to date being awarded to local firms. On site today there are about 200 workers and I have been informed by NIHG that, by this time next year, this will increase to approximately 700.

"Construction of the hospital remains on target for 2012 and I thank everyone involved for their continued dedication to this project. Once completed, the hospital will provide modern, state of the art facilities to meet the needs of the people of the south west."

Western Trust Chairman Gerard Guckian explained that the new acute hospital is a key element in the Trust's continued focus on delivering high quality acute patient care. He stated: "The Western Trust is implementing a number of key initiatives in preparation for the new hospital. This includes the recent opening of the medical and surgical assessment unit in the Erne Hospital and the Cardiac Assessment unit in the Tyrone County Hospital in Omagh. This new state of the art facility will help to attract and retain the very best medical/clinical staff."

He continued: "The progress made to date is testament to the partnership approach and focused efforts of all involved. We offer our thanks for the level

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of commitment shown by my Trust colleagues, the Project Team, the Department and our contractor Northern Ireland Health Group.”

Notes to editors:

1. When completed the new hospital will provide a wide range of acute services including a 24/7 Accident and Emergency department; critical care services; inpatient medicine and consultant-led maternity services.
2. The construction works are focusing on the completion of the main entrance bridge and road over the low lying area to the front of the site, the carparks and the construction of the energy centre that will serve the site. The New Year will also see the completion of a mock-up facility containing a number of the key hospital rooms to allow thorough testing prior to installation.
3. Press enquiries to the DHSSPS Press Office on 02890520575 or Out of hours, please contact the Duty Press Officer via pager number 07699 715 440 and your call will be returned.
4. For additional information on the New Hospital construction please contact Anita McConnell, 028 8283 5891 or 078 414 69476 or anita.mcconnell@westerntrust.hscni.net