

News release
5th November 2009



PHG Foundation wins ERBI NHS Partnership Award for work to combat sudden death in young people

Partnership is part of NHS East of England vision for 21st Century

A holistic approach to a group of devastating illnesses won the respect of judges for the 2009 ERBI NHS Partnership Award. The PHG Foundation, which bridges the gap between exploratory science and clinical practice, gained the award for its report on the inherited cardiovascular conditions that, for example, cause sudden death in seemingly healthy young people. It demonstrated how the latest advances could help improve diagnosis, care and prevention.

This award is sponsored by NHS East of England. Head of Innovation Kate Gill comments that the region has an ambitious vision for 21st century healthcare: *"The ERBI awards help to identify groundbreaking new innovations and play an important part in improving the working relationship between industry and the NHS, which is fundamental to increasing our rate of innovation."*

"We need both large scale and smaller scale innovations, and some of these will be 'big ideas'. However, it is just as important that we have ideas to improve the level of integration of innovations into current or new patient care pathways and improve the quality and effectiveness of the care provided for patients."

The PHG Foundation project showed how the latest knowledge could be fast-tracked in order to provide improved and accessible care for patients and families.

Carol Lyon, Operations Director for PHG Foundation explained what the report revealed: *"In the last few years our knowledge of the genetic basis of certain diseases has led to the development of new genetic tests that can not only aid diagnosis but also inform preventative care for patients and their families."*

"We have also seen new developments in electrophysiology, echocardiography and imaging. We saw the potential for using these technologies in the treatment of inherited cardiac conditions, which affect 340,000 people in the UK. Outside a very few specialist centres, people with heart problems are traditionally cared for by cardiovascular specialists. Our recommendation is that a multi-disciplinary team is required."

"Another area of concern is the support for other family members after the loss of a child. The Coroner is unable to retain tissue for further analysis and this means that valuable information that could be used to protect siblings is destroyed."

The Department of Health Heart Team has been enthusiastic about the issues raised by PHG Foundation, and Carol is concerned to see that, in the face of difficult public spending conditions, progress is maintained in implementing the lifesaving recommendations. *"Winning the ERBI award is important to us as it recognises our huge commitment to partnership with the NHS, as well as highlighting this report and the need for further action to adopt these recommendations"*, she commented.

Harriet Fear, CEO of ERBI, says that the NHS Partnerships Award is valuable as it celebrates projects that could have patient benefit in the near term: *"Understanding the end user of the service or technology is of fundamental importance. For example we welcome the development of a Biomedical Park in the region, which help bring science, business and health provision closer together"*.

The PHG Foundation report on improving care for families with inherited cardiac conditions in the NHS is available from the PHG Foundation website, www.phgfoundation.org.

- Ends -

For more information please contact:

Dr Philippa Brice

philippa.brice@phgfoundation.org

07505092081 or 01223 741506

www.phgfoundation.org

Notes to Editors

- The PHG Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit, health policy and service development organisation based in Cambridge, UK, but working internationally.
- Our overarching aim is making science work for health - to see the benefits of biomedicine and genomics realised as better health for people including vulnerable populations worldwide.
- We are the leading UK centre for public health genomics, and have considerable experience in policy research and development, as well as evidence-based evaluation of clinical tools and health services.
- We are pro-science, but emphasise the responsible application of innovative technologies for health services, taking into account ethical, legal, social, regulatory and economic considerations.

The PHG Foundation is the working name of the Foundation for Genomics and Population Health, a charitable company registered in England and Wales, charity no. 1118664 / company no. 5823194.

Registered address: PHG Foundation, Worts Causeway, Cambridge, CB1 8RN, UK.

Telephone: +44 (0) 1223 740200

Fax: +44 (0) 1223 740 892