

# Guerrilla war on germs

**Patient safety continues** to be a top priority for the Trust, spearheaded by the Safer Patients Initiative (SPI). Recent months have seen a number of initiatives that have had some success in highlighting infection prevention and control measures.

Among the latest developments, six new wards at The Royal London have joined the Safer Patients Initiative, with ward sisters undertaking weekly hand hygiene audits and daily safety briefings. In February, a vascular access nurse was appointed, who will have a key educational role for ensuring good practice in line management.

To complement the SPI, a new highly interactive, ward-based education programme has been introduced. Using a high-tech medical simulation manikin, doctors and nurses work together in training scenarios that develop clinical knowledge, effective behaviours and good practice, particularly in infection control, that lead to safer patient care.

## A safe environment

The next step in the war on infection is adapting a guerrilla marketing approach to engage more people in taking action. Funded by NHS London, the campaign, being launched in May, will focus on tackling the three main factors of infection control – hand hygiene, intravenous line management and appropriate antibiotic prescribing (which is particularly important for controlling C difficile).

While the campaign on line care and prescribing will particularly target clinicians, hand hygiene is a shared

responsibility that involves everyone who comes into contact with patients, including visitors and other patients as well as staff.

“Providing a safe environment for our patients must be at the heart of all we do,” said Chief Executive Julian Nettel. “This campaign aims to be challenging and thought provoking, resulting in real and sustained changes in behaviour.”

At a practical level, new signage is being rolled out across the hospitals to encourage people to

clean their hands before entering clinical areas, as well as before and after any contact with patients. Many of the other channels that are in the pipeline for getting the message across will be a little more unusual, using strong visuals displayed in places where people wouldn't normally expect to find them.

DVD and web-based staff training packages will also be developed as a further stage in the campaign.

New hand hygiene signage is driving the message home around our hospitals

