



## Press Release

05.09.2013

### Medipass Sees Health Minister for Northern Ireland open its New Radiotherapy Linac



*Radiotherapy team at Belfast Cancer Centre show new MES equipment to Northern Ireland Health Minister Edwin Poots*

Recently, the Northern Ireland Health Minister Edwin Poots officially opened a new radiotherapy linear accelerator, which is part of the Medipass MES at the Belfast Cancer Centre.

Speaking at the opening ceremony the Minister said: "Following a substantial investment of over £1.5million in 2012, the Cancer Centre now boasts a 9th linear accelerator which means patients can not only continue to access radiotherapy treatment in a timely manner but can now also benefit from new techniques not previously available in Northern Ireland."

David Rolfe, CEO of Medipass, added, "This ninth linear accelerator is part of a radiotherapy expansion project that will soon see 10 linacs available at the Cancer Centre, all funded as part of the Medipass Managed Equipment Service, which provides all the major medical equipment within the Centre."

Mr Rolfe continued, "These new accelerators, which are an upgrade that we were able to negotiate with the equipment provider Varian, are the most advanced in their line of equipment.

This will allow for the introduction and improvement of a number of techniques for the patients of Northern Ireland such as intensity modulated radiotherapy (IMRT), image guided radiotherapy (IGRT), four dimensional CT, respiratory gating and stereotactic radiotherapy."

The Minister spoke of how impressed he was by the quality of the building, which Medipass staff helped to design, and the professionalism, enthusiasm and dedication of staff. The investment has also supported the expansion of two key staffing groups within the Cancer Centre – medical physics and therapeutic radiographers.

**Colm Donaghy, Chief Executive of the Belfast HSC Trust, commented:**

"We are delighted that through working with the DHSSPS and the Health and Social Care Board we have much needed additional radiotherapy capacity which importantly has the technological capability to offer patients' higher doses more accurately and with less side effects. This consolidates our position as a leading radiotherapy centre in the UK."

Currently the Cancer Centre is the only place in Northern Ireland delivering this service. The 9th linear accelerator has been clinically operational since July 2012 and reached full capability in October 2012. In addition, Medipass worked closely with the Trust and Varian so that the planned replacement of one of the oldest machines could be brought forward. Now with three machines with the latest technology features, a fourth is also set to come on line in 2014 as part of the Medipass MES fleet. Radiotherapy at the Belfast Cancer Centre averages daily attendances of 250 outpatients and 15 inpatients – this is approximately 65,000 patient treatments a year, for which Medipass assists the Trust by continuously maintaining above 98% uptime on all its linacs.