

Equipment will help teach complex life-saving skills

by NEIL SKINNER

STAFF at Watford General Hospital say a newly-donated piece of training equipment will improve the treatment of potentially life-threatening ectopic pregnancies.

The new surgical training machine will allow junior doctors to safely practice vital surgical skills before working on real patients.

As many as one per cent of pregnancies are ectopic, meaning they occur outside the womb. If untreated they can cause life-changing complications and even death.

At Watford General Hospital some 90 women a year are treated for the condition, mostly via laparoscopic surgery – often referred to as keyhole surgery.

The abdominal training device, donated by training company Pharmabotics, allows users to practice techniques in safe and realistic conditions before operating on real patients.

Dr Laurie Irvine, a consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist who secured the donation through his work with the Ectopic Pregnancy Foundation (EPF), said it would save lives in the future.



From left, Dr David Griffin (senior consultant), Dr Laurie Irvine and Mary McLachlan (specialist trainee) with the new ectopic training equipment. Picture 48E0224: HOLLY CANT

He said: "Without this it would not be possible for our younger doctors to learn these vital techniques so we are very grateful. I will now be able to train more people to carry out these procedures."

Dr Irvine is a trustee and founder member of the founda-

tion, a registered charity that campaigns for greater awareness of the condition among the public and medical profession.

He has worked to raise awareness of the condition since the early 1980s, when he carried out his first surgical procedure – the removal of an ectopic pregnancy.

He added: "It's a very serious and very upsetting condition for patients but is often missed or not diagnosed by medical staff because the symptoms are confused."

For find out more about ectopic pregnancy or the EPF visit www.ectopicpregnancy.co.uk