Tiny Tickers places ‘life-changing’ machines to help babies at the Royal Berkshire Hospital

Wednesday 19 May, 2021

The Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust has received a donation of six pulse oximetry machines from Tiny Tickers, a charity that aims to improve the early detection and care of babies with serious heart conditions, with thanks to generous funding from the Shanly Foundation. These monitors, which can help detect serious heart conditions soon after birth, will be used to help improve early detection rates of congenital heart disease (CHD). The donation has been described as ‘life-changing’ by hospital staff.

Every baby has a physical examination within 72 hours of life, but at present, pulse oximetry screening does not form part of the mandatory newborn checks. A pulse oximetry test estimates the amount of oxygen in a baby's blood - low levels can be a sign of CHD. The test is carried out using a machine called a pulse oximeter, with sensors placed on the baby's skin.

Tiny Tickers has been placing pulse oximetry machines in maternity units all over the UK since 2017, with The Royal Berkshire hospital receiving the 200th machine. The charity aims to place 330 machines to fulfil the initial demand from maternity units by April 2022.

> Shanly Foundation trustee, Tamra Booth said, ‘We all at the Shanly Foundation are thrilled to be able to help Tiny Tickers achieve the fantastic milestone of 200 pulse oximeter machines, saving the lives of so many seriously ill babies.’

A baby is born with a serious heart condition every two hours in the UK. However, not all congenital heart defects can be detected during routine prenatal scanning and some babies are at risk of falling into the early stage of heart failure if their condition is not diagnosed in time. Tiny Tickers wants to change this situation.

> Gill Valentine, Director of Midwifery, Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust said: “Thank you Tiny Tickers for your donation of six handheld pulse oximetry monitors for use at the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust Maternity Unit. We recently implemented a change in practice whereby all babies have their oxygen saturations monitored as part of their routine observations. We had only one monitor on the postnatal ward to perform this task for all the babies. Your donation has meant that we can now perform these observations much more efficiently, as the postnatal ward now has three monitors. Your generosity has also meant that we can supply monitors to our home birth team, maternity recovery theatres and the intrapartum team. Another significant benefit for us will be the saving on consumables, which will be redirected into improving services for the benefit of our mums and babies.”
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> Tiny Tickers Chief Executive, Jon Arnold added, “Placing 200 machines is a real milestone for our small charity. We are truly delighted that we can help in this way and hope the donation supports the team at The Royal Berkshire to continue providing the best possible care for babies.”

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