

# Pioneering health centre hailed as boost for Highlands

## LIFE-SCIENCE FACILITY OFFERS TRAINING AND RESEARCH FOR STUDENTS AND MEDICS

BY JANE CANDLISH

The final phase of a multimillion-pound health centre offering training and research facilities for professionals and students in the Highlands was officially opened yesterday and hailed as a major boost to the Highland economy.

The Centre of Health Science, on the Raigmore Hospital site in Inverness, is a partnership between businesses, academic institutions and NHS organisations.

The £23million centre is owned by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE). It already employs around 200 people, and 400 students currently attend its facilities.

Enterprise Minister Jim Mather MSP performed the official opening ceremony yesterday.

He said: "The Centre for Health Science provides

state-of-the-art facilities in an excellent environment for training and research, as well as high-quality jobs. It represents a major addition to health science activity already under way in the Highlands and islands.

"Along with HIE and UHI, the Scottish Government is working hard to ensure we can exploit the full potential of the life-science sector and ensure it makes the maximum possible contribution to increasing sustainable economic growth."

The first phase, which opened in 2006, accommodates Stirling University's department of nursing and

midwifery, an NHS Education for Scotland postgraduate medical centre, and a library of healthcare books.

The second phase includes



the Centre for Rural Health, a dental centre and school and a clinical skills centre, using life-size mannequins costing up to £11,000 to teach medical procedures to students and postgraduates.

The computer-controlled mannequins simulate different medical conditions, including pregnancy.

Kevin Baird, clinical lead for the skills centre, said: "We have to appreciate that medical training is complex. You have to learn a lot in a short time and we need to maximise the use of time and make the experience as rich as possible. It is no longer acceptable to practice on real patients."

The third phase of the building, which has just been completed, includes the Highland Diabetes Institute, a partnership between NHS Highland, UHI Millennium Institute and LifeScan Scotland.

Health Science Company chairman Alasdair Munro said: "I think the centre will take research and training to a new level in the area. This is something that has never existed before and it is an important addition.

"We have never had academic facilities before so not a lot of research has been done in the Highlands and islands. That will change."

HIE chairman Willie Roe said: "The Centre for Health Science is a fantastic building and hugely important resource for the Highlands and islands. The reason HIE is at the centre of this development is our firm belief that the economic future of the Highlands and islands is closely linked to the creation of a vigorous knowledge economy and the healthcare and life sciences cluster we

now have in Inverness is a vital component."

The public will be able to see round the centre during an open day today.



Willie Roe: 'fantastic'





**OPEN WIDE:** Jim Mather, who officially opened the new Centre for Health Sciences at Raigmore Hospital in Inverness, yesterday, also visited the dental suites. Photograph: Sandy McCook

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