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## Next-generation patient wristbands to improve hospital care

~ nursing staff use intelligent tagging to verify patient needs quickly and easily ~

Zebra Technologies Europe Ltd has launched the most comprehensive range of patient identification wristbands currently available in the UK.

Using a combination of barcode and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology, the wristbands will enable nursing staff to spend 30 per cent more of their time treating patients<sup>1</sup>, instead of tracking down busy doctors to clarify treatment information.

Scanning a barcode or RFID tag in a patient's wristband will quickly retrieve a range of information assigned to the individual patient, whether they are receiving medication, having a blood transfusion or giving a sample. As a result, nursing staff will immediately have bedside access to patient details and exact prescriptions without having to interpret a doctor's handwriting or search hospital records to clarify medication instructions.

Zebra believes that the wristbands will dramatically reduce the 200,000 medication errors each year in the NHS<sup>2</sup>. In addition, patient identification is rising up the agenda of UK hospitals as they are now legally required to comply with the EU Directive 2002/98/EC, which sets standards of quality and safety for the collection, testing, processing, storage and distribution of human blood and blood components. Zebra's wristband and printer range deliver a simple means of identifying patients throughout the blood transfusion process.

"Hand-written paper and plastic tags damage easily and are therefore often unreliable, yet they are still common in NHS hospitals," said Aileen Ross, healthcare services manager at Zebra Technologies. "Every day a wristband comes into contact with aggressive substances. Zebra's wristbands are resistant to water, alcohol and other solvents, ensuring nursing staff have immediate access to vital patient information simply by scanning the wristband."

"Drugs are a key part of a patient's treatment in hospital. A doctor will prescribe not just the type of drug but also the amount, frequency and delivery method for each medication. It is vital that this is followed, especially in a busy hospital where different staff are on duty day and night," continued Ross. "Barcodes printed using Zebra's

<sup>1</sup> Time savings of 2.75 hours per 12-hour nursing shift have been reported after switching to a bar code-based system to record medication administration.

<sup>2</sup> Hospitals and Health Networks, April 2004



wristband printers contain a unique record of the patient's stay in hospital, be that hours or weeks. Using this unique identification tool ensures all records of treatment, tests and medication are available to nursing staff by using a handheld scanner linked into a wireless network."

The Zebra patient ID solution offers a range of barcoding options as well as passive RFID tags. Four types of wristband are now available for different hospital environments:

- Z-Band Direct: ribbon-less (direct thermal) barcode printable band with secure self-adhesive closure
- Z-Band QuickClip: ribbon-less (direct thermal) barcode printable band with secure clip fastening closure
- Z-Band 4000: Durable Thermal Transfer (ribbon required) barcode printable band with secure self-adhesive closure
- Smart Wristbands: 13.56Mhz RFID wristbands, barcode printable with RFID read-write capabilities allowing patient identification without disturbing the patient

A range of printers can also be installed in key admission areas and networked with the central hospital information system.

For further information about the wristbands, please visit <http://www.emea.zebra.com/eurohealth/> or call 01494 472 872.

**(515 words)**

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **About Zebra Technologies**

Zebra Technologies Corp. (Nasdaq: ZBRA) delivers innovative and reliable on-demand printing solutions for business improvement and security applications in 100 countries around the world. More than 90 percent of Fortune 500 companies use Zebra-brand printers.

A broad range of applications benefit from Zebra-brand thermal bar code, "smart" label, receipt, and card printers, resulting in enhanced security, increased productivity, improved quality, lower costs, and better customer service.

The company has sold more than four million printers, including RFID printer/encoders and wireless mobile solutions, and also offers software, connectivity solutions and printing supplies. Information about Zebra bar code and RFID products can be found at <http://www.zebra.com>

Zebra's international distribution and sales network encompasses more than 90 countries. Zebra Technologies Europe Ltd, headquartered in the United Kingdom, provides product and specialty label sales and support to a wide area of operations,



including oversight of the sales and support offices in France, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, South Africa, and the United Arab Emirates.

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