PM ANNOUNCES NURSE CONSULTANT PLANS AT NURSE 98 AWARDS

Blair thanks every nurse

By Adele Waters

NURSES GAVE prime minister Tony Blair a standing ovation at the Nursing Standard Nurse 98 awards in London last week.

He presented Paula Taylor with the Nurse 98 award for her work in setting up a nurse-led bowel disorder clinic at St Mary’s NHS Hospital Trust in London which uses telemedicine to link up with GPs.

Mr Blair marked the occasion by thanking all nurses for their day-to-day care of patients. He said they were essential to the government’s modernisation programme. ‘We couldn’t do without you.’

He said that at least 2,000 extra nurses would be in post over the coming year. And he announced plans for ‘super nurses’, or nurse consultants, offering nurses the opportunity to practise at higher levels in clinical posts, without being forced into management to gain promotion.

Speaking after the event, Ms Taylor said she was thrilled to win the Nursing Standard award. ‘It must be the most prestigious award in nursing. I was completely bowled over by it. It recognises people who are trying to make a difference by being nurses.

‘It was very nice to meet Tony Blair. He was supportive of nurses who won - nurses who have taken things forward but have stayed with patients, rather than going into management. His idea of the nurse consultant was very appropriate.’

Ms Taylor plans to spend some of her £3,000 prize money on an educational trip to a colorectal clinic in Ohio, where the first nurse practitioner in coloproctology took up post.

Paula was the focus of much media attention after the event, which took place at London’s Savoy hotel. She was interviewed by the national press and later appeared on BBC2’s Newsnight.

Nurse 98 backs bowel cancer screening plan

NURSING STANDARD’s Nurse 98 Paula Taylor has welcomed the latest government initiative to cut the bowel cancer mortality rate.

The £2.3 million scheme was announced last week by public health minister Tessa Jowell.

An estimated 100,000 members of the public aged between 50 and 69 are to be screened using faecal occult blood testing kits over two or three years. Samples will be collected at home and analysed in laboratories.

Health authorities and boards are to bid to take part in the project, aimed at helping reduce the mortality rate from cancer in the under 65s by a fifth by 2010.

Ms Taylor said: ‘Bowel screening has been needed for some time. This is one way of screening patients at high risk. It will certainly reduce mortality. It will also increase awareness of symptoms and help GPs to know when to refer to specialists.’

Launching the scheme, Ms Jowell said it was time to ‘break the taboo of bowel cancer’.

She explained: ‘This pilot will give us the opportunity to gauge whether a national screening programme would be acceptable to the public. Tens of thousands of people are suffering in silence, too embarrassed to speak of their problem.’

The Colo-Rectal Cancer Understanding and Screening [Crocus] Trust also launched a guide to bowel cancer symptoms, ‘Don’t Sit on Your Symptoms’, to coincide with the government initiative. For a copy, call 0181 892 5256.