

Bay Watch

22 April 2008



About Bay Watch

Bay Watch is a weekly political briefing for Welsh NHS Confederation members that is focused on health issues and policies being discussed and debated in the National Assembly for Wales.

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Last Week at the Assembly

First Minister's Questions

The First Minister answered a question on the abolition of prescription charges, which he said was a "flagship policy." He added that: "there is no evidence of abuse of free prescriptions".

The First Minister issued a written response to a question on community services. In his answer, the Minister referred to the restructuring consultation paper which proposes that community services are transferred from NHS Trusts to LHBs.

Read the transcript of First Minister's questions here: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=81804&ds=4/2008#rhif2>

Questions to the Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery

Amongst the issues discussed during questions to the Minister for Public Service Delivery were:

- Local Service Boards
- Private sector involvement in the health service
- Restructuring LHBs
- NHS procurement arrangements
- Cross-border public services
- High dependency ambulances in Powys

Read the transcript here

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=82034&ds=4/2008#a1>

Restructuring debate

In a debate on the Health Minister's plans to reduce the number of LHBs, the Conservatives argued that the government was wrong to introduce them in the first place, saying they were an "extravagant duplication of process and effort." AMs discussed the advantages of coterminous boundaries with Local Authorities, and the need for patients and clinicians to have a strong voice in the new organisations.

The Health Minister stressed that it is a consultation and that she "could be persuaded to make further changes...if such a case were made."

Read the transcript of the debate here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=82034&ds=4/2008#a4>

Written Questions

The following answers to written questions to the Health Minister were published last week:

17 March: Jonathan Morgan requested a breakdown of public and private money for each PFI project in the NHS in Wales. The Health Minister responded

by saying that WAG does not collect commercially sensitive private sector financial data.

18 March: The Health Minister is expecting to publish final strategic action for autism patients in the spring. She added that it is for Local Authorities and LHBs to discuss care needs of adults with autism and provide services based on those needs.

19 March: Edwina Hart published figures for LHB and Trust spending on agency nursing. WAG does not collect information on bank nurses. The Minister also gave an update on progress for the National Service Framework for Older People.

See the latest written questions and answers here:
<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-written.htm>

This Week at the Assembly

Health, Wellbeing and Local Government committee

The committee will meet on Wednesday to discuss the Health Minister's restructuring plans. Mike Ponton and Jonathan Davies from the Welsh NHS Confederation will be giving evidence, along with Ann Lloyd, Director of NHS Wales.

See the agenda in full here:
<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third-hwlg-home/bus-committees-third-hwlg-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=81980&ds=4/2008>

First Minister's Questions

The Minister will be asked two health related questions on WAG's plans to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the NHS and its priorities for dentistry.

Read the questions in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-oral.htm?act=dis&id=81034&ds=4/2008>

DTOC debate

In Wednesday's plenary session, AMs will discuss the recently published independent report into Delayed Transfers of Care.

Read the report here:
http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas/report_of_the_independent_review_of_delayed_transfers_of_care.pdf?langoption=3&ttl=Report%20of%20the%20Independent%20Review%20of%20Delayed%20Transfers%20of%20Care%28pdf%201MB%29

Mental Health LCO

The proposed Mental Health Services LCO Committee will meet on Thursday, where they will hear evidence from the Association of Directors of Social Services.

See the agenda here:
<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-legislation-lco-2008-8/bus-committees-third-ac-agendas-4.htm?act=dis&id=82137&ds=4/2008>

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About the Welsh NHS Confederation

The Welsh NHS Confederation represents the organisations making up the NHS in Wales: trusts and local health boards. We act as an independent voice in the drive for better health and better healthcare through our policy and influencing work, and by supporting members with events, information and training. To find out more about us go to -

www.welshconfed.org