

# Bay Watch

13 October 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

### NHS Reorganisation

In her opening statement, the Minister quoted the Welsh NHS Confederation's view that the reforms would simplify the system, remove organisational boundaries and help improve continuity of care. She said the new service would be "*streamlined in its bureaucracy*" and "*will enable more money to reach frontline services.*"

AMs debated whether the national board represented an over-politicisation of the NHS, or if it would open up the system and strengthen accountability. Jenny Randerson said the new system would be over-centralised and was against what people want, "*which is less, not more meddling in the NHS.*"

Jonathan Morgan called on the Minister to abandon her plans to chair the national board, calling the situation "*unhealthy*" and asked the Minister to clarify where cost savings would come from. The health minister said savings would be made in administration, as work would no longer be duplicated. However, she added that she was not yet in a position to outline the projected costs of the restructuring.

The Minister confirmed her commitment to getting the right financial balance between primary and

secondary care and said she needed further time to consider the operation and timescales.

Read the full transcript of the debate here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=100497&ds=10/2008#rhif5>

### Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

#### *Lymphoedema*

The Deputy Chief Medical Officer is preparing a report, which will encompass key points such as prevention, awareness, training and measuring quality of care.

#### *Neurosciences*

The Minister confirmed there would be one service in different locations, with consultants working together. She said: "*We currently have two centres that provide neurosurgery and that will continue.*"

#### *Restructuring*

The Minister is looking to issue instructions based on existing good practice examples of joint working between health and social care.

#### *Cervical cancer vaccination*

Ms Hart will discuss with the Chief Medical Officer about whether the catch-up programme can be delivered any sooner.

### **Maternity services**

The Minister said maternity services in Cardiff must improve, but noted that the Trust had invested additional resources and appointed ten new midwives.

### **Improving access to GP services**

The GP contract has been enhanced with improved opening hours. The Minister is considering asking LHBs to assess what improvements are being made, and what further improvements are required.

### **Neonatal care**

An additional £2m per annum will be invested in neonatal services from 2009/10. Some of the money will be used on a dedicated transport system.

### **Deaths related to prescription drugs**

Ms Hart will discuss with officials if it is possible to record these figures for Wales.

### **Cancer patients**

The Minister welcomed encouraging survival statistics for breast cancer and said she would consider what other screening services could be used as effectively for other types of cancer.

Read the full transcript of Health Minister's questions here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=100837&ds=10/2008#3>

Written answers have been issued to questions not reached in plenary on the following topics:

- Increased energy costs to the NHS
- Promoting organ donation
- Presumed consent
- impact of neurosciences review on Morriston Hospital
- Autism services.

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=100884&ds=10/2008#1>

### **First Minister's Questions**

The First Minister said that presumed consent would be a "fairer reflection of the will of the people" and will pursue a legislative competence order on the matter.

Read the full transcript of First Minister's questions here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=100497&ds=10/2008#rhif1>

### **Written questions**

Answers to written questions on the following topics have been published on the Assembly website:

Independent prescribing for dieticians, guidelines for fibromyalgia awareness

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-written.htm?act=dis&id=100473&ds=10/2008#rhif3>

Details on the cost of Ministers' overnight accommodation and sustenance

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-written.htm?act=dis&id=100581&ds=10/2008#rhif1>

## **This week at the Assembly**

### **First Minister's Questions**

The First Minister will be asked to comment on:

- The autistic spectrum disorder action plan
- pharmacy services in Wales
- reconfiguration of the NHS.

See the full list of questions here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-oral.htm?act=dis&id=99456&ds=10/2008>

## Older People's Commissioner

Also on Tuesday, AMs will debate the annual report of the Older People's Commissioner for Wales.

Read the report here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-guide-docs-pub/bus-business-documents/bus-business-documents-doc-laid.htm?act=dis&id=100306&ds=10/2008>

## Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee

The committee will scrutinise the draft budget, and will hold sessions with the Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery, the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government, and the Minister for Health and Social Services.

Detailed papers from each Minister and the agenda for Wednesday's meeting are available here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-hwlg-home/bus-committees-third-hwlg-agendas.htm>

## Health debates

In Wednesday's plenary session, the Welsh Conservatives will propose a debate on the need for action to support young carers in Wales.

There will also be a short debate entitled "*Who is Really Paying for the NHS?*" proposed by Angela Burns (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire).

See Wednesday's agenda here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=100749&ds=10/2008>

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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](http://www.welshconfed.org)