

# Bay Watch

18 November 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

### Update on NHS Reforms

The Minister gave AMs an update on the progress of NHS Reforms. In her three key points, the Minister said that:

- The new bodies will adopt the legal format of LHBs, due to their emphasis on co-operation and engagement. She said the move was in keeping with abolishing the internal market and building partnership working.
- Subject to consultation between December and February, shadow bodies will be formed by June 2009, to be fully operational by October 2009. The National Advisory Board will be in place by April 2009. The appointing process for Chairs and Vice-Chairs will begin at the end of 2008.
- She will consult on a board model that combines the best of Trust and LHB experience, with a larger stakeholder group sitting alongside it. Membership will be as open as possible, and the voice of practitioners will be strengthened.

The Minister reiterated her intention that bureaucracy will be reduced with more money being directed towards frontline services. Conservative health spokesperson, Jonathan Morgan, raised concerns that the new boards would be "cumbersome" and asked for assurances that the appointment of Chief Executives would be independent. Liberal Democrat

health spokesperson, Jenny Randerson, asked the Minister to reconsider her role as Chair of the National Advisory Board, arguing that the day-to-day running of the NHS would be wrapped up in party politics.

Read the statement and debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=105414&ds=11/2008#rhif8>

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

#### *Health advice services*

The Minister gave assurances that health advice through the government's Better Advice: Better Health programme would continue.

#### *Palliative care for neurological conditions*

The Minister acknowledged that access is "patchy" but said she would provide £3m of central funding to implement the palliative care report recommendations.

#### *Independent hospices in north Wales*

Darren Millar (Conservative, Clwyd West) questioned the distribution of core funding between north and south Wales. Edwina Hart said discussions would continue as the NHS moved towards a system of service level agreements.

### ***The Ambulance Service***

The Minister is expecting to receive a business case soon for an automatic Vehicle Location System, when she hopes to be able to make the money available. She will report back to the Assembly before Christmas on the problem of ambulances stacking up outside A&E departments.

### ***IVF treatment criteria***

The Minister has no immediate plans to review access criteria.

### ***Rural health***

The rural health plan will be available in the New Year.

### ***Foot care***

The Minister was impressed with Age Concern's report, "Little steps can make a big difference" and will carry out a scoping exercise to see what action needs to be taken.

### ***Cancer services***

The Minister intends to build on the success of the three cancer networks and see if any changes need to be made as the seven new bodies evolve.

Read the session in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=105680&ds=11/2008#1>

### **Ambulance Trust**

The Minister for Health and Social Services has sent her response to Jonathan Morgan in his capacity as Chair of the Health Wellbeing and Local Government Committee, regarding evidence given by the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

Read the letter here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-hwlg-home/bus-committees-third-hwlg-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=105599&ds=11/2008>

### **Dental debate**

The Minister outlined responses to the consultation on the new dental contract, in which there was universal support for the changes and the proposal to introduce charges for missed appointments. Over 60 per cent of those who responded agreed or strongly agreed that the contract was workable.

Read the session in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=105414&ds=11/2008#rhif6>

### **Press releases**

The following press releases were issued from the Health and Social Services department last week.

Wales' Chief Medical Officer on hand to help beat the risk of winter vomiting bug

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2008/2759225/?lang=en>

Planting the seeds for better mental health in Merthyr Tydfil

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2008/081113mentalhealth/?lang=en>

Consultation launched on how best we can pay for care in the future

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2008/081111payforcare/?lang=en>

## **This week at the Assembly**

### **Questions to the First Minister**

The First Minister will be asked to make a statement on:

- drug addiction services across Wales
- how the One Wales commitment to eliminate

the use of private sector hospitals by 2011 will be delivered

- GP services in Islwyn.

Read the list of questions in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-oral.htm?act=dis&id=104391&ds=11/2008>

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-hwlg-home/bus-committees-third-hwlg-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=91632&ds=7/2008>

## Draft budget debate

Also in Tuesday's plenary session, AMs will debate the draft budget. A briefing has been made available by the Members' Research Service, which includes headline figures and comments from all parties. Read the briefing on the link below:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/08-085.pdf>

## Questions to the Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery

The Minister has been asked to comment on:

- the allocation of public money.
- his budget consultation with other Ministers
- overall budget allocation for the Health and Social Services portfolio.

Read the full list of questions here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-oral.htm?act=dis&id=104675&ds=11/2008>

## Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee

The committee will continue its inquiry into Local Service Boards, hearing evidence from the Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery on Wednesday. The Minister will be questioned on his evidence paper, available on the link below:

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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)