

Bay Watch

24 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

First Minister's Questions

Drug addiction services

Liberal Democrat health spokesperson, Jenny Randerson, said drug treatment services in Cardiff *"appear to be on the point of collapse"*. The First Minister explained that Cardiff had been particularly badly impacted by the withdrawal of Home Office funding adding: *"it is not right for us to come in and cover every cut in Home Office funding."*

Private sector hospitals

Conservative health spokesperson, Jonathan Morgan, asked if the 'One Wales' commitment to eliminating the use of private sector hospitals extended to mentally ill patients in treated in private mental health units. Rhodri Morgan said that such units would not qualify as hospitals.

GP services in Islwyn

Irene James (Islwyn, Labour) questioned the First Minister on the large number of GPs in Islwyn reaching retirement age. Rhodri Morgan said that medical schools had doubled their intake but that there is also a gender issue, given that 73% of the intake of Cardiff medical school is female.

Read the session in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=106467&ds=11/2008#a1>

Draft budget debate

Discussion in the debate on the Assembly's draft budget focussed on the settlement for local government. However, Jonathan Morgan, as chair of the Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee, raised concerns about settlement for the health budget, highlighting:

- Health inflation now running at near 10%
- Efficiency savings of 3% being made by the health service
- Resources and capacity needed to reach Access 2009 targets
- Cost of meeting the obligations of the Grogan judgement
- Growing cost of drugs and prescribing budget
- Lack of clarity on the cost of NHS reform

Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=106467&ds=11/2008#a3>

Questions to the Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery

As a result of the Grogan judgment, the Minister said that £100 million additional funding was put into the health and social services budget. He said that he would continue discussions with the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Deputy Minister

for Social Services, adding: *"We are establishing a review to look at this whole area and at both existing and future expenditure."*

Helen Mary Jones (Llanelli, Plaid Cymru) asked what steps were being taken to ensure that the new, larger health bodies would work co-operatively with local government to address the interface between health and social care. The Minister said that these fears were misplaced, adding: *"I am confident that the good work that is being done on joint planning and delivery of social care services, particularly through the local service boards, will continue."*

Read the session in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=106641&ds=11/2008#1>

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

In a written Statement of Opinion, Assembly Members supported calls made by the British Lung Foundation for services to be adequately financed and prioritised for implementation in NHS Wales.

See the statement in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-guide-docs-pub/bus-business-documents/bus-business-documents-state-opinion.htm?act=dis&id=106414&ds=11/2008>

Accessible Information Policies

The Health Minister has issued a report to the Equality of Opportunity Committee on Accessible Information Policies in each Trust and LHB.

See the full report here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-eoc-home/bus-committees-third-eoc-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=106128&ds=11/2008>

This week at the Assembly

Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee

The committee will hold a scrutiny session for the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Deputy Minister for Social Services. A background paper tracks progress on a number of the Minister's key priorities, which she names as the following:

- Hospital cleanliness
- Staff safety
- Organ donation
- Palliative care
- Chronic conditions management
- Cervical cancer vaccine
- Sexual Assault Resources Centres
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Mental Health Legislative Competence

Read the paper in full 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=106639&ds=11/2008>

The committee will also consider an update from the government following its review of cancer services.

Read the accompanying paper 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=106655&ds=11/2008>

Questions to the First Minister

The First Minister will be asked to comment on plans to tackle obesity in Wales. 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=105330&ds=11/2008>

Presumed Consent debate

In Wednesday's plenary session, there will be a debate on the Health Committee's report into presumed consent for organ donation.

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=94336&ds=7/2008>

And the response to the report from the Minister for Health and Social Services here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-guide-docs-pub/bus-business-documents/bus-business-documents-doc-laid.htm?act=dis&id=106605&ds=11/2008>

Violence and aggression debate

In a plenary debate, the Conservatives will highlight their "*grave concern*" about the level of violence against NHS staff and will call on the government to create its own National Service Unit dedicated to raising the number of successful prosecutions.

See more details in Wednesday's agenda:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=106578&ds=11/2008>

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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