

# Bay Watch

2 December 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

### Presumed consent debate

Conservative health spokesperson, Jonathan Morgan, outlined the findings of the Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee report into presumed consent. Although there was no unanimous agreement amongst committee members, the majority view found that:

- Wales-only legislation is possible but complex,
- Presumed consent does not necessarily mean a higher rate of organ donation,
- Slightly less than half of people surveyed were in favour of presumed consent,
- The money needed to set up a presumed consent system could be put to better use improving existing infrastructure,
- Presumed consent is not a “silver bullet”.

Liberal Democrat health spokesperson, Jenny Randerson, was amongst the three committee members who did not agree with the report's overall findings, and highlighted an “*undoubted connection*” between presumed consent and higher rates of organ donation in other countries.

Health Minister, Edwina Hart, outlined improvements already being made in the infrastructure of transplant services, such as the new renal transplant unit in Cardiff. She said that work was ongoing to get a

more representative view from the public, but that she would not rule out introducing a system of presumed consent.

Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=107491&ds=11/2008#rhif6>

### Violence and aggression debate

Jonathan Morgan claimed that there were things the NHS could be doing currently to help protect staff from violence and aggression, and called on the government to set up a legal protection unit to support staff seeking prosecution, much like the unit set up in England in 2003. He argued that Welsh NHS staff do not have access to the same level of legal protection as those in England.

Joyce Watson (Labour, Mid and West Wales) argued the need for a supportive culture, where staff feel more protected through increasing the number of police officers in hospitals, and increasing the use of CCTV.

Edwina Hart said she was developing a “*robust action plan*” and the work being carried out by David Francis, Chair of Cwm Taf NHS Trust, would be key. The problem of violence and aggression would be “*reinforced*” to the boards of the new health organisations, and increasing the use of CCTV

would be a priority. In response to calls for a legal protection unit, the Minister said the criminal law system applies in England and Wales, giving the same legal protection to NHS staff working in both systems. She added that in Wales, the Welsh Legal Health Services is there to work with police and the Crown Prosecution Service. NHS employers should also provide staff with free access to solicitors.

David Melding (Conservative, South Wales Central) argued that it should not be the individual pursuing prosecutions, but the employer. He also called for a “*central resource*” in the form of a unit similar to England’s.

Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=107491&ds=11/2008#rhif7>

## This week at the Assembly

### First Minister’s Questions

The First Minister will be asked to comment on:

- children in care
- well-being of older people in Wales
- the future of social services departments in Wales

Read the full list of questions here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-oral.htm?act=dis&id=106400&ds=12/2008>

### Welsh Liberal Democrats Debate

In Wednesday’s plenary, the Liberal Democrats will propose a debate on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. They will call on the Welsh Assembly Government to adopt the principles of the UN Convention into all aspects of government policy.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities can be accessed on the following link:  
<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=259>

See more detail on the debate in Wednesday’s agenda:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=107353&ds=12/2008>

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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)