

Bay Watch

26 January 2009



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 Estates Debate

Liberal Democrat health spokesperson, Peter Black, claimed that *"hospitals are in such an appalling state that, in many instances, they are breaking laws and regulations,"* adding: *"if they were nightclubs, they would be shut down."*

Conservative health spokesperson, Jonathan Morgan, said there is a need to incentivise those who run the NHS to *"manage the estate better."*

In response, Health Minister, Edwina Hart said that the matter was not *"a cause for alarm"* and that the claims from the Liberal Democrats were *"ill-informed, ill-thought out and ill-directed."* She pointed to an increase in the annual capital allocation to health, now £337m, compared to £100m prior to 2004. She said that the purpose of this increased investment was not to do maintenance work on buildings *"that will never be fit for purpose, whatever we do."*

In response to queries about the future of the planned £292m critical care hospital for Gwent, the Minister said there had been a lot of scaremongering about her intervention (see BBC story here - http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/south_east/7838512.stm), explaining that: *"all I have asked is for certain tasks to be undertaken."*

Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=113645&ds=1/2009#a6>

Substance Misuse Strategy

The Minister for Social Justice, Brian Gibbons, outlined the successes so far of the government's substance misuse strategy, which he said had created almost 3000 new treatment places.

Mark Isherwood (Conservative, North Wales) said huge gaps in service provision still remained, and claimed that bureaucratic systems were preventing clients from accessing treatment.

Liberal Democrat health spokesperson, Peter Black, called on the government to increase treatment places and asked for assurances that the strategy would address the problem of children being admitted to hospital as a result of poisoning by illegal drugs.

Conservative health spokesperson, Jonathan Morgan, said that the Assembly Government did not take the issue of public health seriously enough, and that the NHS would struggle to treat people in 20-30 years' time.

Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=113313&ds=1/2009#a5>

First Minister's Questions

Dialysis treatment facilities

Priority areas include a permanent dialysis unit in Pembrokeshire and new units in north Gwent, Powys, south Gwynedd, Deeside and Baglan.

Read the full transcript here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=113313&ds=1/2009#a1>

This Week at the Assembly

Debate on the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales Annual Report

The Conservatives will call on the Welsh Assembly Government to outline how it will address the 'unacceptable variations in performance' highlighted by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales Annual Report 2007/08.

More details in Tuesday's agenda:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=113269&ds=1/2009>

View the CSSIW annual report here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=113388&ds=1/2009>

Questions to the First Minister

The First Minister will be asked to comment on:

- provision of healthcare in Wales
- services for AIDS patients
- a strategy for tackling the winter pressures on 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=111330&ds=1/2009>

Conservative debate

The Conservatives will call on the Welsh Assembly Government to appoint a "cancer tsar" for Wales. On behalf of the Liberal Democrats, Peter Black will argue that the government should look into all possible options for improving cancer services in Wales, including whether it is feasible to have a cancer tsar.

More details in Wednesday's agenda

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=113503&ds=1/2009>

Wednesday short debate

The leader of the Liberal Democrats, Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire), will propose a debate on Ambulance Cover in Powys at the end of Wednesday's plenary session.

See Wednesday's agenda here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=113503&ds=1/2009>

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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