

# Bay Watch

26 February 2008



## About Bay Watch

*Bay Watch* is a new 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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## This week at the Assembly

### Written questions to the Health Minister

Health Minister Edwina Hart will answer written questions from Nick Ramsay (Monmouth, Conservative) this week on the following:

- Encouraging participation in the bowel cancer screening programme
- Discussions with Health Commission Wales regarding specialised neuromuscular services
- Recognising neuromuscular services as part of the Specialised Services Commissioning Plan.

Read the questions in full here:-

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-written.htm?act=dis&id=75204&ds=2/2008>

We will report the Minister's answers in next week's Bay Watch.

### First Minister's Questions

The First Minister will be asked four health related questions in Tuesday's plenary session, regarding:

- Progress on Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr
- Increasing the number of drug and alcohol rehabilitation services

- Improving access to the NHS
- Facilities in South Wales Central for people living with physical impairments.

Read the full list of questions here:-

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-oral.htm?act=dis&id=74693&ds=3/2008>

### Questions to Other Ministers

The Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery will be asked to comment on:-

- Improving performance of public service delivery in Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire
- Policies to promote citizen-centred public service delivery
- Capital required in health and education budgets for the next three years.

Questions for the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills include:

- funding speech therapy services for school pupils
- plans to improve school nutrition.

Read the full list of questions for both ministers here:-

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-oral.htm?act=dis&id=74885&ds=3/2008>

## Plenary debate

In Wednesday's plenary session, Sandy Mewies (Delyn, Labour) will lead a short debate on "*Chlamydia, the silent epidemic*".

## Last week at the Assembly

### Mental Health LCO

Shadow Health Minister, Jonathan Morgan, proposed an LCO (Legislative Competence Order) to allow mental health patients quicker access to treatment. The powers would also allow for mental health patients to receive independent advocacy services during treatment.

More details here:-

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-guide-docs-pub/bus-business-documents/bus-business-documents-doc-laid/lco-ld6957-em-e.pdf?langoption=3&ttl=LCO-LD6957-EM%20-%20National%20Assembly%20for%20Wales%20%28Legislative%20Competence%29%20%28Health%20and%20Health%20Services-%29%20Order%202008%20-%20Explanatory%20Memorandum>

For more information on what LCOs are, please see the National Assembly website here:-

<http://www.assemblywales.org/abthome/abt-nafw/abt-nafw-powers-responsibilities.htm>

### First Minister's Questions

Cross-border health services

The First Minister stated that the policy remains unchanged: "Safe, effective services provided as locally as possible, whether across the border or not."

Members discussed the system by which Local Health Boards pay English Trusts for treating Welsh patients. The First Minister said that although some English hospitals are unhappy that they are not paid as much by Wales as they are by England, it is the Department of Health who make the decisions on

the payment system.

The First Minister concluded by saying that Edwina Hart is in contact with England's Health Minister, Ben Bradshaw on this matter.

Read the discussion in full here

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=75616&ds=2/2008#rhif1>

### Questions to the Health Minister

#### Car parking

The Minister said that she would be reforming hospital car parking charges and is intending to make an announcement on it this coming week.

#### Cancer patients

The Minister said she was pleased with the developments of cancer networks and wants to see them take on more responsibility. Ms Hart emphasised her determination to tackle confusion about which NHS organisations pay for what, saying: "Patients do not need to know about rows over funding, they simply need to know that they will get their treatment."

Members also discussed whether cancer patients from Powys should go to Hereford or Cheltenham for treatment.

#### Older people

Deputy Health Minister, Gwenda Thomas, said that "intermediate care is developing well in Wales." Shadow Health Minister Jonathan Morgan highlighted that the number of bed days lost has worsened. Ms Thomas responded by saying: "We cannot pretend to be able to sort this out overnight."

#### Obesity

Edwina Hart reiterated tackling obesity as a priority, emphasising that it is a responsibility not just for the health service or for government, but for us all. Darren Millar, Conservative Clwyd West, remarked that there are far too many fat politicians in Wales and that until Members were able to lead by

example, “it is a bit rich for us to tell others how to live their lives.”

### ***The NHS in Mid and West Wales***

The Minister will ask officials to look into the possibility of mobile renal dialysis unit. Ms Hart also intends to look further into assessing mental health patients through the medium of Welsh.

### ***Priorities in West Wales***

Priorities for West Wales are exactly the same priorities throughout the whole of Wales, said the Health Minister – improving services, access and the patient experience. In response to a question on a permanent renal unit in Withybush, she responded by saying that she was “dealing in the long-term” on that issue.

### ***High Dependency Ambulances***

Trish Law (Blaenau Gwent, Independent) raised concerns about the high dependency ambulances in Blaenau Gwent replacing existing ambulances. Edwina Hart said she was “acutely aware of the disquiet in the service about the possibility of closing ambulance stations.” She said it was “a matter for discussion with the ambulance trust”.

### ***Adults with autism***

Janet Ryder (North Wales, Plaid Cymru) requested that the Government’s autism strategy take into account the needs of adults with autism, claiming that there is a perception that people “grow out” of autism. Deputy Health Minister, Gwenda Thomas, said that the final strategy will be published in the spring.

### ***Neuromuscular conditions***

David Lloyd (South West Wales, Plaid Cymru) highlighted that there is currently no specialist provision for patients with neuromuscular conditions. Edwina Hart has asked officials to take work forward in this area.

Answers to questions not reached in plenary:

### ***Not-for-profit nursing homes***

Gwenda Thomas said that policy is being developed carefully and a cross-departmental project board is being set up to look into this matter.

### ***Stroke services***

LHBs and social services are developing regional action plans to improve services for stroke patients.

### ***Breast cancer patients***

Edwina Hart said that the NHS has reached nearly 100% compliance of the standard requiring all breast cancer patients to be seen by a breast cancer clinical nurse specialist.

Read the full record from the Health Minister’s questions here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=76044&ds=2/2008#a1>

### ***Carers needs highlighted***

Helen Mary Jones (Llanelli, Plaid Cymru) proposed an LCO to place a statutory requirement on health and social services bodies to identify carers and inform them of their rights. The proposal received whole-hearted support from all parties and the motion was carried.

Read the discussion in full here:-

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=76044&ds=2/2008#a5>

### ***Health Committee Inquiries***

The Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee is undertaking an inquiry into presumed consent for organ donation, and is calling for those with an interest or expertise in this area to submit written evidence.

More information, including the questions to consider, is on this link:-

[http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third-assem/bus-committees-third-hwlg-home/organ\\_inquiry.htm](http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third-assem/bus-committees-third-hwlg-home/organ_inquiry.htm)

The Committee's inquiry into workforce planning continues. Read more details, and responses submitted so far, here:

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

## **Audit Committee**

### *DTOC Report*

The Audit Committee has published a report entitled "Tackling Delayed Transfers of Care across the whole system". Read the report here:

[www.assemblywales.org/cr-ld6962-e.pdf](http://www.assemblywales.org/cr-ld6962-e.pdf)

### *HCAI*

The transcript from the Audit Committee's wide-ranging discussion on Healthcare Associated Infections is now available. Ann Lloyd, Paul Barnett and Dr Mike Simmons gave evidence at the session earlier this month. Read the transcript here:-

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third-assem/bus-committees-third-ac-home/bus-committees-third-ac-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=74653&ds=2/2008#rhif2>

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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)