

# Bay Watch

26 May 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.

If you have any queries about this publication, please contact [jonathan.davies@welshconfed.org](mailto:jonathan.davies@welshconfed.org)

## Last Week at the Assembly

### Questions to the First Minister

#### *Ambulance service*

The First Minister acknowledged that delays in the handover time at A&E were “a huge waste of time” and “it needs to be resolved”. He explained that it is not clear where the fault lies – whether it is due to bed-blocking, or lack of organisation and clinical leadership in A&E departments.

Read the discussion in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=130174&ds=5/2009#1>

### Swine flu

The Health Minister gave an update on the latest situation with regards to swine flu, updating members that:

- The government is preparing for the possibility of a more severe second wave of the virus in the winter.
- The UK is increasing its stockpiles of antivirals, to cover 80 per cent of the population by the autumn.
- A national flu service will be up and running by the autumn.

- All UK governments have signed agreements to secure 90 million doses of the pre-pandemic H1N1 vaccine. By December of this year, there should be enough for at least half of the UK population.
- WAG is working with the Health Protection Agency to clarify guidance on which face masks should be used and when.

Read the statement in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=130337&ds=5/2009#3>

### Restructuring

In a discussion on the establishment of the new Local Health Boards, Liberal Democrat health spokesperson, Peter Black, expressed concern at how the new LHBs would co-operate with social services. He also raised the issue of LHB board membership, and agreed with the Welsh NHS Confederation’s proposal that LHBs should be allowed some flexibility with regard to their membership, “rather than it being dictated from the centre”.

Read the discussion in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=130337&ds=5/2009#6>

## Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee

The transcript is now available from the Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee's ministerial scrutiny session with Edwina Hart, Paul Williams and Professor Mike Harmer.

Among the issues discussed were:

### *Primary care*

The work being carried out by Dr Chris Jones is looking at the development a generic primary care role, much like the "person in the village who knows everything", but applying that role to health, i.e. someone to tell patients where they need to go and who they need to talk to.

### *Joint working*

Powys County Council and Powys LHB have been in discussions on how the two organisations could work together. Options range from a full merger to health and social care possibly coming together. The organisations will report back late summer.

### *Finance*

Discussing the difficult financial times ahead, Paul Williams said: "In the financial year that has just closed, we were looking at a 4 per cent cost improvement programme. We are modelling this year on a 5 per cent cost improvement programme, with the possibility of having to move up to 7 per cent in 2010-11 and beyond."

### *Other issues discussed:*

Hospital cleanliness and the issue of "hotbedding"  
Encouraging staff to attend violence and aggression training  
Progress of chronic conditions demonstrator sites  
Community pharmacists as prescribers  
Recruiting overseas medical staff  
Ambulance handover times

The Minister also gave evidence to the committee's inquiry into mental health, commenting on whether there was a danger mental health could slip down

the agenda in the new LHBs.

Read the transcript 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=130015&ds=5/2009#2>

**There is no business to report for this week due to the half term recess.**

THE **WELSH NHS CONFEDERATION**  
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Unit 3  
Waterton Park  
Bridgend  
CF31 3PH

Tel 0845 33 00 499  
E-mail [info@welshconfed.org](mailto:info@welshconfed.org)

## 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)