

Bay Watch

9 June 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

Questions to the First Minister

Cystic Fibrosis

The First Minister praised the all Wales Cystic Fibrosis centre in Llandough Hospital and supported the start-up scheme that encourages cystic fibrosis patients to attend "mainstream" gyms. However, Conservative spokesperson, Andrew RT Davies, criticised funding for the unit, which currently only funds treatment for the number of patients the unit treated in 2004.

Consultations

The First Minister was questioned on the number of consultations being carried out by the Welsh Assembly Government. So far, 92 consultations have been carried out in 2009. Angela Burns (Conservative, Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire) urged the Minister to adopt the code of practice developed by the Scottish Government.

Bullying in the NHS

In light of bullying allegations at the University Hospital of Wales maternity unit, Andrew RT Davies called upon the First Minister to eradicate the culture of bullying where it exists. Rhodri Morgan said he would wait until the completion of an investigation into the allegations.

Read the session in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=131273&ds=6/2009#1>

Statement on measles

The Health Minister gave the latest update on the measles outbreak. She outlined actions being taken, including:

- Redistributing copies of the DVD 'Immunisation—Why Our Children Must Be Protected' to all outbreak areas, with plans to provide copies to all secondary schools in Wales during the next two weeks.
- New leaflets for parents to explain the risk from measles.

The Minister added that she would explore the option of making vaccinations an entry requirement for nurseries and schools.

Read the statement in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=131273&ds=6/2009#Goch>

Unified Public Health Organisation

In a statement on the close of the public health consultation, the Minister confirmed her intention to

establish the new unified public health organisation as an NHS trust, to be known as Public Health Wales. The Trust will operate in shadow form from 1 August 2009, and will be fully operational from 1 October 2009. Professor Mansel Aylward has been appointed to the role of chair of Public Health Wales.

Public Health Wales will incorporate the functions and services provided by

- the National Public Health Service,
- the Wales Centre for Health,
- the Wales Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit,
- the Congenital Anomaly Register and Information Service, and
- Screening Services Wales.

The Welsh Blood Service remains with Velindre NHS Trust. There will be an officer member with responsibility for public health in each of the seven local health boards; although they will be employed by the LHB. In addition to the chief executive officer and a director of finance, the roles of the remaining three executive directors will be at the discretion of the board.

Jonathan Morgan (Conservative, Cardiff North) queried whether cancer screening services and the surveillance unit would be better placed in Velindre NHS Trust.

Read the session in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=131273&ds=6/2009#iehcyd>

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Orthodontic treatment

The Minister has set up a sub-group to look at some of the issues relating to orthodontic treatment.

MMR vaccine

The Minister favours education over compulsion and

supported the BMA's view that what is needed is trust between patients and the medical profession.

Recruiting doctors

The Minister attributed recruitment problems to changes to immigration rules, the introduction of the European working time directive and "the inability of the NHS in Wales, sometimes, to attract people to work here". She said officials, the service and the deanery are working together to seek improvement.

Eating disorders

A consultation on the framework for eating disorders in Wales was completed earlier this year, with funding available to support the implementation of the framework. The Minister added: "The important thing is to keep this on the agenda of the new local health boards in order that they recognise it as a priority area and that they must do something substantial."

Community-acquired MRSA

Cases of community acquired MRSA are currently rare in Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government has therefore focused on increasing public awareness of general respiratory and hand hygiene and how to use antibiotics appropriately, with the aim of reducing all infections, including community-acquired MRSA.

A&E waiting times

The Minister said it was an ongoing issue to look at the communication streams between the NHS and patients. She is considering a publication about the rights and responsibilities of patients when it comes to accessing unscheduled care.

Mental health services

The first draft of a dementia plan for Wales has been prepared. The Minister has asked officials to look at the recommendations "in the context of who needs to deal with them rather than take a blanket approach". She is hoping to launch the dementia plan for consultation in the next few weeks.

Primary care nurses

The Minister reiterated her support for a roll-out of

nurse prescribing.

Asperger's syndrome

The development of consistent arrangements for access to assessment, diagnosis and important post-diagnostic support will be a key action for this financial year.

Read the session in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=131529&ds=6/2009#1>

Written answers were issued to questions on oral health, ambulances, access to medical records, Gwent clinical futures programme and adult psychiatric units here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=131552&ds=6/2009>

Press releases issued

New national cancer standards for sarcoma services published

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2009/090603sarcomastandards/?lang=en>

Health Minister officially opens new cancer suite at Singleton Hospital

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2009/090603cancersuite/?lang=en>

This Week at the Assembly

Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee

The committee will soon begin an inquiry into stroke services, and will discuss the terms of reference for the inquiry in their Thursday meeting.

See more detail in the committee paper:

<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=131528&ds=6/2009>

In plenary this week

Tuesday

The First Minister will be asked to comment on security for NHS staff, and the provision of neuromuscular services.

See Tuesday's agenda here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=131197&ds=6/2009>

Wednesday

The Health Minister will make a statement on the latest situation regarding swine flu.

See Wednesday's agenda here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=131483&ds=6/2009>

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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