

# Bay Watch

22 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.

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

Conservative health spokesperson, Andrew RT Davies, claimed that less than 2 per cent of patients with diabetes have access to a structured programme of education to help manage their condition.

In response, the First Minister said that patients are the ultimate expert patients and they know more about their condition than their doctors do. He added: "As for the particular points about education, I will have to look at the report that you mention and get back to you."

Read the session in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=133274&ds=6/2009#1>

### Conservative debate – NHS budget priorities

The Conservatives called upon the government to show how it can sustain front-line services in the current economic climate. He added that a Conservative Government would be committed to over and above increases in the health budget, and highlighted the need for more investment in stroke

and palliative care services.

Jonathan Morgan called for "budgetary discipline", saying "We also have to be honest with the people of Wales about how these services will be delivered. We have to be honest about...what the NHS should and should not do, and how much it will cost."

The debate largely centred on the free prescriptions policy. Conservative health spokesperson, Andrew RT Davies described it as "an unattainable aim", while his Liberal Democrat counterpart, Peter Black, expressed his own personal belief that "we cannot go back on the free prescription policy".

Dai Lloyd (South Wales West, Plaid Cymru) said that resurrecting prescription charges would mean resurrecting "the complicated bureaucracy to police it".

The Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery, Andrew Davies, responded in place of Health Minister Edwina Hart. He said the government was taking action to remove the bureaucracy of the internal market, allowing more funding to reach front-line services. He added that free prescriptions are "a long-term investment in improving health".

Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=133694&ds=6/2009#5>

## Liberal Democrats debate – Neonatal care

Liberal Democrat health spokesperson, Peter Black, claimed that there is a shortage of neonatal nursing and medical staff in Wales and argued that there is no system for coordinating the transport of babies around neonatal units.

Former Liberal Democrat health spokesperson, Jenny Randerson, said the current reconfiguration of health boards and trusts was “not solving the problem either – it is actually leading to delays and confusion”.

The Deputy Minister for Social Services, Gwenda Thomas, responded in place of the Health Minister and acknowledged a shortage of nurses, which she said is being addressed through the National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare (NLIAH). A review by Health Commission Wales in 2005 identified the development of a transport system and in October 2008, the Minister for Health and Social Services announced an additional £4 million over two years to support it. An implementation plan is now being developed that maps out the future of neonatal transport services in Wales

Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=133694&ds=6/2009#6>

## Swine flu

The Health Minister issued a written statement on swine flu, in which she outlined the following points:

- The World Health Organization raised the alert level to Phase 6 on June 11<sup>th</sup>.
- 34,000 cases have been confirmed in 76 countries across all continents, including 1800 confirmed cases in Australia.
- The WHO declaration does not, of itself, trigger any material change in domestic preparations.
- All three confirmed cases in Wales to date

have been travel related to the US

- The move to Phase 6 means that vaccine manufacturers will need to meet the contractual obligations of advance purchase agreements for vaccines with the UK.

Read the statement in full here:

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/newsitem.cfm?contentid=12349>

For the most up-to-date information, please see the Welsh Assembly Government website here:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/health/protection/communicabledisease/swine/?lang=en>

## Press releases issued

Welsh Assembly Government opens up debate on dementia

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2009/090619dementia/?lang=en>

Regulations changed to allow failed asylum seekers access to free healthcare

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2009/090619asylum/?lang=en>

Work starts on the development of world class Breast Care Unit at Prince Phillip Hospital

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2009/090618breastcareunit/?lang=en>

New Director of Social Services Wales appointed

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2009/090618director/?lang=en>

First Minister tells councils to work together to improve social services

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2009/090618socialservices/?lang=en>

Chief Executive of Hywel Dda LHB appointment

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2009/090617appointment/?lang=en>

National Advisory Board meeting  
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/health/2009/090616advisoryboard/?lang=en>

Plans to improve sexual health services and cut infections  
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2009/090615sexualhealth/?lang=en>

## This Week at the Assembly

### In plenary this week

*Tuesday*

**The First Minister** will be asked to comment on promoting health and wellbeing in our communities.

See Tuesday's full agenda here:  
<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=133152&ds=6/2009>

*Wednesday*

**The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government** will be asked to comment on alcohol and drug misuse in Wales, and tackling domestic violence.

AMs will debate access to **palliative care services** in Wales.

See Wednesday's full agenda:  
<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=133656&ds=6/2009>

### Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee

The committee will continue its inquiry into stroke services, hearing evidence from:

- Dr Hamsaraj Shetty, regional stroke unit in Cardiff,
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists.

See Thursday's full agenda 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=133689&ds=6/2009>

THE **WELSH NHS CONFEDERATION**  
CONFFEDERASIWN **GIG CYMRU**



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)