

# Bay Watch

11 March 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

### Tuesday: First Minister's Questions

The First Minister will be asked to make a statement on hospital car parking charges in Tuesday's plenary session. For a full list of questions, please click here: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-oral.htm?act=dis&id=76578&ds=3/2008>

Also on Tuesday: The Proposed NHS Redress (Wales) Committee will meet to consider amendments to the proposed Measure.

### Wednesday: NHS Dentistry Debate

A Liberal Democrat debate in Wednesday's plenary session will focus on the NHS Dentistry Contract. The Lib Dems will highlight access problems and will call for a re-drafted version. Labour will argue that thousands of extra NHS dentistry places have been created as result of the contract.

See more details in Wednesday's agenda: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm>

### Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee

The Committee will meet to continue its inquiry into presumed consent for organ donation, receiving evidence from Wales Legislation Online on Wednesday. They will also receive a progress report on substance misuse and the regulation and

inspection of public services.

To see the full agenda, and additional written evidence for the organ donation inquiry, please use the link below: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third-assembly/bus-committees-third-hwlg-home/bus-committees-third-hwlg-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=77881&ds=3/2008>

### Mental Health LCO Committee

The Proposed Provision of Mental Health Services LCO (Legislative Competence Order) Committee will meet on Thursday. LCOs are a type of secondary legislation, which transfer specific powers from Parliament to the Assembly. The proposed mental health LCO would enshrine specific patient rights in law, including:

- a right to assessment and treatment in a therapeutic setting before compulsion becomes the only safe option,
- a right for patients to receive independent advocacy.

### Audit Committee

The Audit Committee is considering the Welsh Assembly Government's response to its recent report "*Review of the new General Medical Services Contract in Wales.*" Read the report here: <http://www.assemblywales.org/cr-ld6927-e.pdf>

And the response from the Health Minister here: <http://www.assemblywales.org/cr-ld6979-e.pdf>

## Last Week at the Assembly

### First Minister's Questions

The First Minister was absent on government business in North Wales. Andrew Davies, Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery, answered questions in his absence.

#### **Community nurses**

In a discussion on the role of community nurse, AMs questioned the Minister about nurse prescribing, Agenda for Change "gateways" and the related costs to Trusts, and the Assembly's commitment to providing school nurses.

#### **Car parking**

Leader of the Opposition, Nick Bourne, asked how Trusts would meet the costs for additional policing of car parks once car parking fees are abolished. Andrew Davies answered by saying it was "a matter for NHS Trusts to deal with" and the costs were "a miniscule amount compared with total expenditure on the NHS." Nick Bourne said that the amount would not be insignificant to Trusts.

#### **Devolution**

Leader of the Liberal Democrats, Mike German, asked if the Minister agreed with Ben Bradshaw's comments on the health service in Wales (see [http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/betsanpowys/2008/03/the joys\\_of\\_devolution.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/betsanpowys/2008/03/the joys_of_devolution.html)). Andrew Davies said that "performance in Wales is broadly similar to the rest of the UK" and referred to comments from Dame Gillian Morgan, soon-to-be Permanent Secretary of WAG and current Chief Executive of the UK NHS Confederation, that as a result of devolution, there are now four different health services in the UK.

#### **Dental Contract**

Jenny Randerson, Lib Dems Health Spokesperson, asked if the Minister would consider "tearing up" the old dental contract due to problems patients have had accessing NHS dentists. Andrew Davies maintained that access to NHS dentistry has improved as a result of the new contract, with access

problems currently confined to a few areas. He added that a Task and Finish Group had been set up to review the contract.

For the full transcript of First Minister's questions, click here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=77885&ds=3/2008#rhif1>

#### **Public engagement**

The Health Minister gave an oral statement on a report into the consultation processes used for the reconfiguration of services in North Wales. She said that although the LHBs had followed the spirit of the Assembly's guidance on public engagement, they had failed to engage the public effectively. The report makes a number of recommendations, including a call for more clinical leadership in public engagement and also recommends that WAG's guidance should be revised.

Read the Health Minister's statement, and the questions that followed, here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm>

#### **Cross border public services**

In a debate on the delivery of public services, the Liberal Democrats highlighted the difficulties some patients in border areas have experienced in accessing services in England. Andrew Davies, the Minister for Public Service Delivery, maintained that the government is working to "improve arrangements" in cross-border public service delivery. Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=78142&ds=3/2008#a12>

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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)