

Bay Watch

10 November 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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This Week at the Assembly

In plenary

Tuesday

The First Minister will be asked to comment on:

- healthy living amongst school children
- ensuring good financial management by public bodies in Wales
- effective use of resources in the NHS.

See the full agenda for Tuesday's meeting here: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=150740&ds=11/2009>

Social Care Measure

The legislation committee tasked with considering the Proposed Social Care Charges (Wales) Measure has published its Stage 1 Report. In Tuesday's plenary session, AMs will vote on a motion to approve the general principles of the Measure. The aim of the Measure is to create a fairer system for local authorities to adopt when charging for non-residential social care services.

For more information, see the Explanatory

Memorandum from the Deputy Minister for Social Services here: <http://www.assemblywales.org/ms-ld7602-em-e.pdf>

Wednesday

The Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery will respond to a question on plans to review the Strategic Capital Investment Fund.

Also on Wednesday, AMs will debate the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales' Annual Report. The report is available to read here: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-guide-docs-pub/bus-business-documents/bus-business-documents-doc-laid.htm?act=dis&id=134302&ds=6/2009>

There will also be a short debate on raising the profile of blindness in Wales.

See the full agenda for Wednesday's meeting here: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=150944&ds=11/2009>

Last Week at the Assembly

Ministerial scrutiny session

The Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee held a scrutiny session with the Minister for Health and Social Services.

The Minister offered to produce a paper in due course to show the savings achieved through restructuring. She said that interviews for management positions were still ongoing, and in the long term, there are “bound” to be savings. She underlined that the restructuring has been a success already and that management of the new LHBs has been “up to the mark”.

Good progress is being made on the Access 2009, 4-hour A&E, ambulance response times and handover targets, said the Minister. However, swine flu could intervene, she added. The Minister affirmed that the 26-week target is sustainable within the budgets given. She said it was too easy for people to ask for extra money, and that management would have to “think laterally” about how to make best use of the budget available.

Other topics discussed included possible legislation to ban smoking on hospital premises, contracts with private car parking companies, presumed consent for organ donation, and the neurosciences review.

The transcript of the session is not yet available.

Stroke services

The Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee took evidence from the Minister for their inquiry into stroke services in Wales, where topics discussed included junior doctor training rotas, the importance of therapies staff, joint working with local authorities and continuing professional development of staff.

The transcript of the session is not yet available.

Questions to the Health Minister

NHS services in North Wales

The Minister expects the local health board to do a lot of forward planning to deal with population growth in some areas of North Wales. She welcomed the recent performance of the Ambulance Trust in the North Wales area.

Social services for 18-25 year olds

The Deputy Minister for Social Services said that social workers’ workloads are sometimes a concern, but recruitment is going well in Wales.

Patient transport services

Win Griffiths’ review of patient transport services is expected to be completed for consultation by January 2010.

Targets

The Minister recognises that the NHS faces tight financial settlements, and she is looking at the issue of intelligent targets and reviewing the annual operating framework. However, she added: “I set the direction of policy, and they [NHS employees] have to get on with it.”

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

The Minister is keen to ensure that there is no gap in service provision at the end of the current pilot scheme. She is looking strategically at the issue to encompass all the devolved issues that affect veterans.

Hospital vending machines

Ann Jones (Labour, Vale of Clywd) raised the issue of allowing staff personal choice when it comes to what they eat during work time. The Minister will ask the partnership council and the joint management of the trade union body whether they have any comments.

Neurological services

The Minister was “especially pleased” with the

“strong clinical consensus” for the implementation planning group’s recommendations. She added that the review was backed unanimously by all neurosurgeons working in mid and south Wales.

The full transcript of the session is available here: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=150985&ds=11/2009#1>

the First Minister to continue to debunk the myth that health service managers were “people sitting on their backsides doing nothing”.

Read the session in full here: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=150799&ds=11/2009#1>

Cardiac services

The Conservatives raised concerns that cardiac services fall short of current and projected need, and called on the government to improve services and tackle inequalities.

In response, the Health Minister outlined some of the steps the government has taken to improve services and reduce inequalities, such as Health Challenge Wales and the network of healthy schools scheme.

Read the debate in full here: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=150985&ds=11/2009#6>

First Minister’s Questions

The First Minister was questioned on improving care services for the elderly, including the issue of advocacy and the need for more not-for-profit care homes.

Conservative health spokesperson, Andrew RT Davies, also raised the issue of displaced managers as a result of the no redundancy policy. The First Minister responded by saying that the 37 different organisations did not all have a full complement of separate executive directors and that many posts were shared.

Chris Franks (Plaid Cymru, South Wales Central) urged

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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