

Bay Watch

17 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

Equality of Opportunity Committee

The Committee continues its inquiry into discrimination against people living with HIV by healthcare professionals, hearing evidence from the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The Welsh NHS Employers' Unit, which is part of the Welsh NHS Confederation, has submitted the following written evidence to the committee: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-eoc-home/bus-committees-third-eoc-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=151946&ds=11/2009>

In plenary

Tuesday

The First Minister will be asked to respond to questions on continuing NHS healthcare claims, and delivering healthcare in rural areas.

The Deputy Minister will make a statement on her "Paying for Care" Green Paper.

AMs will also debate the draft budget for 2010/11.

See the agenda in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=151702&ds=11/2009>

Wednesday

AMs will debate the Equality of Opportunity Committee's Report on home maintenance and adaptations services for older people in Wales.

See Wednesday's agenda in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=151997&ds=11/2009>

Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee

The Committee will begin its inquiry into wheelchair services, hearing evidence from MS Society Cymru and Disabled Children Matter Wales. The committee is calling for those with interest or expertise in this area to submit evidence.

More information on the inquiry is available here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-hwlg-home/business->

[hwlg-inquiries/hwlg_3 -wheelchairs/hwlg_3 -wheelchairs-callforevidence.htm](http://www.assemblywales.org/hwlg-3-wheelchairs/hwlg-3-wheelchairs-callforevidence.htm)

Maternity services

The Public Accounts Committee (previously the Audit Committee) will hear evidence on maternity services from

- Paul Williams, Head of Health and Social Services, Welsh Government
- Simon Dean, Director of Strategic Direction and Planning
- Rosemary Kennedy, Chief Nursing Officer.

See Thursday's full agenda here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-ac-home/bus-committees-third-ac-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=152284&ds=11/2009>

Last Week at the Assembly

Swine flu

The Health Minister issued a written statement giving an update on swine flu. Although planning assumptions have recently been revised downwards, swine flu still poses a serious threat, said the Minister. There have now been 14 deaths in Wales, and this is expected to increase over time, she added.

Read the statement in full here:

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/newsitem.cfm?contentid=13630>

First Minister's Questions

Healthy living among school children

The First Minister said free healthy school breakfasts played a key role, but agreed that bike sheds were important in encouraging children to be physically

active.

Robbie Powell

The First Minister was questioned on whether he would call a public inquiry into the case of Robbie Powell, who died in April 1990 of undiagnosed Addison's disease. Mr Morgan said he could not give an unconditional answer while ongoing investigations were continuing elsewhere.

NHS debt

Jonathan Morgan (Conservative, Cardiff North) raised concerns about the £95m of debt currently held by the NHS in Wales. The First Minister said that in the information available to him, the accounts of the seven new local health boards do not reflect any outstanding debt. He added: "We do not want to see any inappropriate incentives for lazy accounting or failure to reform."

Financial management

In response to queries raised about evidence given by NHS Wales Finance Directors at a recent Finance Committee meeting, the First Minister said NHS Wales needs much quicker acceptance of best practice. Mr Morgan added that he "did not disagree" with the assertion that £1bn of NHS money could be better spent.

Read the session in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=151824&ds=11/2009#q1>

Social Care Measure

The Deputy Minister for Social Services presented the general principles of the Proposed Social Care Charges (Wales) Measure. She argued that the new system would create consistency in the way that local authorities charge for non-residential social services.

Mark Isherwood, chair of the legislation committee scrutinising the measure, said the key

recommendation of the committee is to ensure that no service user should be worse off as a result of the measure.

The proposal to agree the general principles of the measure was agreed without objection, concluding Stage 1 of the passage of the measure. Stage 2 means that AMs can now table amendments to the measure, for consideration by the Stage 2 committee.

Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=151824&ds=11/2009#cynnigcodiff>

Blindness

Sandy Mewies (Labour, Delyn) called on the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government to ensure that support for people with sight loss is better reflected at a strategic planning level.

Brian Gibbons, agreed that some of the problems that people with a disability face are not in relation to medical treatment, but to obstacles or a lack of support. He said the assembly government was adopting the "social model of disability" to look at the range of social supports in place.

Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=152010&ds=11/2009#8>

Ministerial scrutiny session

The transcript of the Ministerial scrutiny session, as reported in last week's Bay Watch, is now available 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=151769&ds=11/2009>

European Working Time Directive

Updated information on compliance with the European Working Time Directive is available in a letter from the Auditor General, Jeremy Colman, to the Public Accounts Committee (previously named the Audit Committee).

Read the letter here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-ac-home/bus-committees-third-ac-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=152290&ds=11/2009>

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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