

Bay Watch

25 January 2010



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 Deputy Minister for Social Services will make a legislative statement on a proposed Carers' Strategies Measure.

AMs will debate the annual report of the Chief Inspector of the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW).

For more detail, Tuesday's agenda is available in full here: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=162513&ds=1/2010>

Wednesday

The Minister for Health and Social Services will answer questions on:

- discouraging people from taking up smoking
- eating disorder services in Bridgend
- the Rural Health Plan
- specialist rehabilitation services for young patients
- improving access to medical services
- the smoking ban
- her priorities for the NHS in 2010
- patient transport services

- child and adolescent mental health services
- cardiac services at the Royal Gwent Hospital
- improving the hospital experience of NHS patients.

For more detail, Wednesday's agenda is available in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=162648&ds=1/2010>

Last Week at the Assembly

Frontline services debate

In a Conservative-proposed debate, health spokesperson Andrew RT Davies called for frontline NHS services to be protected. He referenced the Nuffield Trust report on devolution as proof that the Welsh NHS is underperforming and claimed there were as many bureaucrats as nurses.

The Liberal Democrats' health spokesperson, Peter Black, repeated calls for the Health Minister to investigate claims that 20% of the NHS budget isn't being spent appropriately, but he acknowledged that these funds were not going into a "black hole", but rather that the money is not being spent "to secure the most effective outcomes".

In response, the Minister for Health and Social Services

said it was important to recognise the service needs clerical support, but that technology should be used to minimise bureaucracy. She defended the policy of no redundancies in the recent restructuring, saying that managers have a role and function in the NHS, and congratulated them for struggling into work in the recent difficult weather conditions.

Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=162677&ds=1/2010#4>

NHS Estate Maintenance

In a Liberal Democrat-proposed debate, health spokesperson Peter Black claimed that a £505 million maintenance backlog was leading to staff and patient safety incidents. AMs acknowledged that not all repairs need to be done, with some older buildings outliving their usefulness.

The Minister for Health and Social Services outlined examples of new building projects that would help to reduce the maintenance backlog in the coming year, such as major upgrading works to Ysbyty Gwynedd, and new hospitals in Ystrad Mynach and Ebbw Vale.

The Welsh NHS Confederation prepared a briefing for AMs ahead of the debate, which is available here:

<http://www.welshconfed.org/companyData/1898/resources/Estate%20final.pdf>

Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=162677&ds=1/2010#5>

Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee

The committee continued its inquiry into wheelchair services, hearing evidence from Chief Executive of Cardiff and Vale University LHB, Jan Williams; General Manager of Clinical Support Services at Cardiff and Vale University LHB, Mike Spencer; and Chief Executive of Betsi Cadwaladr University LHB, Mary Burrows.

Mrs Williams explained that the targets for wheelchair waiting times are being met in south Wales; Mrs Burrows apologised to the committee that targets in the north are not currently being reached.

The representatives outlined improvements being made in their respective areas, including a move towards more integrated services, increasing the role of community therapists, creating a 7-day home visiting service, and introducing performance indicators based on quality of life outcomes. The representatives also stated their commitment to work more closely with social care and education to provide a more integrated and efficient service to children and young people.

The committee also heard evidence from physiotherapy and occupational therapy representatives.

The transcript for the session is not yet available, but updates will be included in future editions of Bay Watch.

Equality of Opportunity Committee

The draft transcript is now available for the session in which HR representatives from NHS organisations gave evidence to the committee inquiry into discrimination against people living with HIV by health professionals.

Read the transcript in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-other-committees/bus-committees-third-eoc-home/bus-committees-third-eoc-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=162058&ds=1/2010>

Post traumatic stress disorder

Mark Isherwood, Shadow Minister for Social Justice, said that that the complex mental health needs of thousands of war veterans are not being met. He called upon the Minister to reconsider her decision not to supply a grant to Pathways, a project in North Wales providing mental health services to veterans.

In response, the Health Minister said her commitment to this area was "absolute". She said that a variety of services is available in the NHS in Wales, including access to generic mental health services through GPs, community

mental health teams, and more specialist treatments. In addition, she said a new target has been set for 2010-11 to "remind NHS organisations of their obligations to... comply with the arrangements on priority treatment and healthcare for veterans".

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=162677&ds=1/2010#7>

about the issue of excess winter deaths, and the progress being made in implementing single-sex wards in Welsh hospitals, and the impact this has on dignity and respect for elderly patients.

Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=162297&ds=1/2010#4>

First Minister's Questions

Specialist and critical care centre at Llanfrechfa Grange

The First Minister confirmed the Health Minister's support for Llanfrechfa Grange as the preferred site for the development of the specialist centre. Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board is working to develop the business plans needed to underpin the delivery of the scheme, he added.

School nurses

In response to concerns about the progress being made on the One Wales commitment to introduce one nurse per secondary school, the First Minister said the commitment is for the course of the whole term of this Assembly Government. He added: "It is now 2010 and all that needs to be put in place to deliver the nurses is ready."

Reducing alcohol consumption

The First Minister said that education measures would be taken forward on the dangers of drinking, but added that many of the levers that could effectively deal with alcohol, such as minimum pricing, are outside the competence of the Assembly.

Read the session in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=162297&ds=1/2010#1>

Older People's Commissioner Annual Report

The Deputy Minister for Social Services presented the annual report of the older people's commissioner for Wales. AMs welcomed the report but raised concerns

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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