

# Bay Watch

8 March 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

### Tuesday

#### Children and Young People Committee

The committee meeting in which Janet Hawes, Vice Chair of Hywel Dda LHB and Sue Kent, Vice Chair of Aneurin Bevan LHB, were due to give evidence on children and young people's mental health services has been postponed.

#### Plenary

There is no plenary meeting due to the PCS Union strike

### Wednesday

#### Plenary

The Minister for Business and Budget will answer questions on behalf of the First Minister. She will be asked to comment on the youth drinking culture in Wales and cancer care.

The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government will be asked to comment on reducing alcohol related crime, and community safety.

#### Proposed Carers Strategy (Wales) Measure

The committee will hear evidence from

- Beverlea Frowen, Director for Social Services and Health Improvement at the Welsh Local Government Association
- Barnado's Cymru.

### Thursday

#### Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee

The committee will continue its inquiry into neonatal services, hearing evidence from Bliss, the Expert Group on Neonatal Services, and the RCN.

For more information, see this week's business notice:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-business-notice.htm>

## Last Week at the Assembly

### NHS debate

The Welsh Conservatives raised concerns about the lack of accountability and transparency in the running of the Welsh NHS. Their health spokesperson, Andrew RT Davies, questioned the new structures of the CHCs, claiming that the reduced number of members would affect their ability to carry out their scrutinising duties effectively. He also described his concern over the manner of communication between the Minister and NHS organisations, with Ministerial letters that replaced Welsh Health Circulars, no longer being in the public domain, which is creating a perception of secrecy around hospital closures amongst other things.

Liberal Democrat health spokesperson, Peter Black, questioned whether reorganisation had freed up resources for the frontline. He quoted figures that the no

redundancy policy would cost £4 million a year.

In response, the Health Minister said the NHS was built on accountability, and that she is accountable for the whole of the NHS. She argued that the transparency of the open National Advisory Board meetings cascades throughout the NHS, and that the health service is more open than ever before.

Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=170523&ds=3/2010#dadlceids>

## Dementia debate

Conservative health spokesperson, Andrew RT Davies, called on the government to take measures to meet the growing demand for dementia services. He stressed the importance of ensuring the forthcoming dementia action plan is not “just a piece of paper” and urged the government to announce when they would publish it. Mr Davies also called for dementia to have a higher profile in research budgets.

Peter Black, liberal democrat health spokesperson, raised concerns about the lack of psychologists and mental health nurses.

David Lloyd (Plaid Cymru, South Wales West), said that dementia patients largely receive social care, therefore the “quality and intensity of social care needs to be equivalent to medical and nursing care”. He called for health and social care to be brought together into one body.

In response, the Deputy Minister said that dementia services were one of two intelligent targets set for 2010. She added that she was “developing my thoughts” on when the National Action Plan would be published. Consultation responses revealed that many people thought the plan was too ambitious in the current financial climate.

Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=170523&ds=3/2010#gofal>

## Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

### *Community hospitals*

The Health Minister said she is not aware of any threats to community hospitals across Wales; adding that the community hospital is a resource that should be utilised fully for health purposes.

### *Junior doctor recruitment*

The Minister gave assurances that she is working with all partners on this issue. She supported the work of the BMA and the deanery, but said that further work still needs to be done.

### *Ambulance handovers*

The Minister said insufficient work has been done by some of the LHBs to manage accident and emergency departments effectively and efficiently. She added: “There must be a far more holistic and wide-scale approach when looking at some of these issues in order to sort out the front end.”

### *NHS estate*

The Minister again ruled out the use of PFI, saying it “is not in the best interest of the patient because the patient is a taxpayer.”

### *Obesity*

Last month, the draft all-Wales obesity pathway was issued for consultation. In addition, Change4Life, a social marketing programme addressing obesity, will be launched next week. The Minister will ask officials to look at various Slimming World ventures that have taken place in Wales that are examples of good practice.

### *Eating disorders*

The Minister said there is a need to tackle the stigma around eating disorders. She added: “I hope that the local health boards in particular, among others, will look collectively at how they could run an anti-stigma campaign.”

### *CAMHS*

There is a mixed picture across Wales, said the Minister, and although there are still concerns, the service must be praised for good work in certain areas. A group of expert stakeholders has been established to develop the national

programme for CAMHS by May 2010.

#### *Alcohol pricing*

The Welsh Assembly Government does not currently have the powers to introduce a minimum price for alcohol. However, the government has expressed its wish to see this introduced by the UK Government and will continue to press the matter with Whitehall.

Read the session in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=170523&ds=3/2010#q1>

### **First Minister's Questions**

#### *Not-for-profit nursing homes*

The First Minister confirmed that the One Wales commitment still stands. However, further examination of the proposal found that restricting the selection of bidders to the not-for-profit sector would be a breach of state aid rules. The First Minister added: "I am aware that progress in taking forward this commitment has been slow, but I am confident that the development of integrated resource centres will provide a broader range of local services, including nursing home provision, relevant to local communities."

#### *Care home reorganisation in Neath Port Talbot*

The First Minister said that, ultimately, it is a matter for Neath Port Talbot. He added that any local authority, regardless of where it is, needs to handle any changes "with the utmost sensitivity".

Read the session in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=170226&ds=3/2010#2>

### **Deep rural areas debate**

AMs debated the findings of the Wales Rural Observatory report. Amongst the health issues discussed were:

- Access to accident and emergency services in areas where tourism doubles the population during peak season, and the importance of the air ambulance in these areas.
- Lack of public transport to access services

- Delivering services such as chemotherapy through a network of community hospitals, in mobile units, or in people's homes
- The importance of voluntary sector, state sector and communities working together to provide services in rural areas.

Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=170226&ds=3/2010#6>

### **Carers Strategies Wales Measure**

NHS representatives Dr Ed Roberts, Vice-Chair of ABM Local Health Board and Peter Llewellyn, Head of Partnerships and Integrated Commissioning for Hywel Dda Local Health Board, gave evidence to the Proposed Carers' Strategy (Wales) Measure Committee. They welcomed the broad principles of the proposed measure, and welcomed the increased focus on the contribution of carers across Wales.

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

Written evidence, compiled by the Welsh NHS Confederation, is available here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-perm-leg/bus-committees-third-lc5-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=169760&ds=3/2010>

### **Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee**

The committee is inviting written evidence for the two following inquiries:

Local Safeguarding Children Boards in Wales – more information here: [http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-scrutiny-committees/bus-committees-third-hwlg-home/business-hwlg-inquiries/hwlg\\_lscb/hwlg-lscb-consultationletter.htm](http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-scrutiny-committees/bus-committees-third-hwlg-home/business-hwlg-inquiries/hwlg_lscb/hwlg-lscb-consultationletter.htm)

Neonatal care – more information here: [http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-scrutiny-committees/bus-committees-third-hwlg-home/business-hwlg-inquiries/hwlg\\_neonatal/hwlg-neonatal-consultation-letter.htm](http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-scrutiny-committees/bus-committees-third-hwlg-home/business-hwlg-inquiries/hwlg_neonatal/hwlg-neonatal-consultation-letter.htm)

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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)