



bulletin

Issue 12 16 December 2002

Bulletin is a regular update for members on the work being carried out by the Welsh NHS Confederation on their behalf. It complements *Interchange Alert*, published by our London office, which gives members an overview of the Confederation's work at UK-wide level. If you have any queries about either publication, please contact kevin.sullivan@confed.wales.nhs.uk.

A message from new chairman Lloyd FitzHugh

The Confederation in 2003 -
a strong voice for all NHS
organisations in Wales



Lloyd FitzHugh

The end of the year is a good time for looking both forward and back. So as I begin my term of office as chairman, I would like first of all to thank my predecessor, Hugh Thomas, chairman of Swansea NHS Trust. Throughout his time as chairman, Hugh has shown a commitment to the Confederation which is second to none and I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks and best wishes to him for the future. I took over the chairmanship from Hugh at our recent annual conference in Cardiff and I was delighted to see so many members and partners there, making the event a big success. This and other successes in 2002 provide a firm foundation on which to build in 2003.

Looking ahead, 2003 promises to be an important year in the continuing development of the Welsh NHS Confederation. Priorities over the coming year will include strengthening our links and our influence with politicians in Wales and Westminster, developing our relationship with partners from local government and the voluntary and commercial sectors, extending the ways in which members can be involved in our work, and of course continuing to promote the key role played by management in delivering improved patient care.

But perhaps our key challenge in 2003 is to ensure that we continue to act as a strong united voice for all our members once the changes to the structure of NHS Wales take effect on 1 April. A priority for us is to welcome the new Local Health Boards into full membership, so that in Wales as in England, primary care organisations have a voice at the heart of the Confederation. We have already amended our constitution to ensure that LHBs and Trusts will have equal representation on our management committee. We hope too that initiatives such as our Ideas Forums, our links to the UK-wide resources of the Confederation, and our work on the new GMS contract, will all help support LHBs as they take on their new roles.

I believe that the Confederation has a key role to play in the new and enlarged NHS in Wales. The new structure rightly places much emphasis on delivery and accountability at local level. The Confederation can complement this by providing at national level a strong and united voice for all NHS organisations, from all parts of Wales. I look forward to working closely with Richard and his team in 2003 to help ensure that we continue to provide that strong united voice for all our members from across the NHS family.



GMS contract update

As negotiations continue, we are making plans to help ensure that primary care organisations in Wales are given as much information and support on the contract as possible in the next few months:

- **Planning briefing events** - We are planning to hold events in February where key players from the NHS Confederation team involved in the negotiations will brief Welsh members on the contract. We will contact you soon with further details.
- **Developing an e-mail support network with NatPact** - The Confederation has received funding from NatPact (National Primary and Care Trust Development Programme) in England to co-ordinate a network aimed at supporting primary care trusts, helping them to develop the knowledge and skills needed to implement the contract. The network will be the gateway to a range of activities such as workshops on relevant issues. Although NatPact's remit covers England, as a UK-wide organisation the Confederation is encouraging Welsh members to take part in the network. If you are interested in registering on this network, please contact Clare Woodford clare.woodford@nhsconfed.org or Kevin Sullivan kevin.sullivan@confed.wales.nhs.uk
- **Supporting Assembly plans for implementation** - The National Assembly is setting up a project board to drive the implementation of the new contract and we will be working closely with them. This board will be chaired by Bob Hudson, chief executive of Gwent Health Authority and member of the Confederation's management committee. The Assembly will also be appointing a project manager to drive the implementation programme.

Ideas Forum on Primary Care - 23 January

The next IF, which will focus on primary care issues, will take place on 23 January at Hensol Castle between 10 am and 1 pm. If you have ideas that you wish to see discussed at this IF, please contact Jonathan Davies, policy manager, by 17 December (jonathan.davies@confed.wales.nhs.uk). The Ideas Forum website will also be demonstrated at the January IF. The site is at www.welshnhsconfed.org. Users will need their usernames and passwords. Please contact Jonathan Davies if you have any queries about the website.

Informing Healthcare - Confederation responds

We recently submitted our response to the National Assembly consultation document Informing Healthcare. We would like to thank the information experts from a range of member organisations who helped us develop our response. The main points we made were as follows:

- Investment in information systems and technology is an investment in improved patient care. It can help improve quality, patient safety, productivity and patient satisfaction.
- The case for change is overwhelming. We support the Wanless report view that change is essential for delivery: *"Without a major advance in the effective use of ICT (...) the health service will find it increasingly difficult to deliver the efficient high quality service which the public will demand."* (section 6.22)
- We support a 'one patient, one record' approach, based on the principle of "corporacy across NHS Wales" and to this end we support the setting up of a National Information Organisation
- This is a massive project and must be led at national level by the National Assembly.
- There must be clear short, medium and long-term objectives and these should fit with the direction of travel of other policy initiatives and objectives (eg Improving Health in Wales, building an integrated health and social care system)
- Training of all staff at all levels at the NHS is essential, as is ensuring the new methods of handling information are quickly and fully integrated into the day-to-day working practices and culture for all staff.
- An average of 4% investment over the 7-year lifetime of the project is the minimum required, in line with the Wanless recommendation. Without this funding the vision set out in this strategy will be undeliverable.
- The funding cannot be sourced out of current budgets and must be provided by the centre with solid ring fencing and central control.

We are planning further work on these issues over the next few months. If you would like to help us with this, or if you have comments or points on this issue which you would like to forward to us, please contact jonathan.davies@confed.wales.nhs.uk

Welcome to new commercial associate members

We are pleased to welcome AstraZeneca as commercial associate members of the Welsh NHS Confederation.

Bulletin will be back in 2003. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us at the Welsh NHS Confederation.