



# bulletin

25 January 2008

Issue 63

**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 [sian.owen@welshconfed.org](mailto:sian.owen@welshconfed.org)

## The year ahead

Rural health, mental health and the patient experience – these are just three of the issues that you will hear more about from the Confederation in 2008. As we welcome in the New Year, the Confederation is looking into its crystal ball to plan a programme of work based on what we think will be some of the “hot topics” of 2008. Look out for future publications, media stories and events based on these issues. However, our work will not be limited to these areas and we will continue to work with our members to influence decision makers on a wide range of important issues the NHS in Wales faces in 2008.

## NHS 60th anniversary

As the NHS celebrates its 60th anniversary, the Confederation will be working with the Welsh Assembly Government and with the media to mark this important milestone in the life of the NHS. We would love to know what your organisation is planning - we may be able to help achieve some positive press coverage of your events. Please let us know about your plans, no matter how big or small, by e-mailing [sian.owen@welshconfed.org](mailto:sian.owen@welshconfed.org)

## Press Work

We provided a comment for the HSJ's coverage of the Audit Committee review of the GMS contract. We explained that although there is work still to be done, LHBs are working very hard to make sure that all the potential benefits of the new contract are fully realised for patients in Wales.

We also gave a comment to the Western Mail in response to the Welsh Conservatives' press release on the “target culture” of the NHS. We said that targets play an important role in improving patient care, especially in terms of waiting times, but we emphasised the need to ensure that all targets are created with the ultimate aim of benefitting the patient.

## Making patients feel better

Our most recent Western Mail column looked at the increasingly important issue of patient experience. As The Department of Health defines it, patient experience means “meeting not only the physical needs of patients but the emotional ones as well.” Our article looked at whether the NHS in Wales, while it is very good at meeting our patients' physical needs, is any good at taking account of patients' emotional needs.

We looked at whether the NHS can learn from the private sector when it comes to providing a customer-focused service. For

example, the Cornell Medical Centre and The Pierre Hotel in New York have a successful partnership which involves training hospital staff how to treat their patients more like hotel guests.



The NHS in Wales is already moving in a more patient-focused direction – but there is still some way to go. It is vital that the NHS does these things better so that the patients' clinical experience is received positively, which will aid recovery and lead to shorter stays in hospital. You can read our article in full on the Western Mail website on this link:

<http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/news/health-news/2008/01/21/making-the-patient-feel-better-91466-20373031/>



## Parting thoughts



January 2008 sees us saying a final farewell to Kevin Sullivan, after seven years as the Confed's Policy and Public Affairs Manager. You may not think Kevin has much in common with George W Bush, but on the very same day back in January 2001, they both sat down to their first day in their new posts. Sadly, the market for Kevin's memoirs may not be as lucrative as those of George Bush, so here, exclusive to Bulletin readers, are three of Kevin's parting thoughts.

"First, I remain awe-struck by the dedication of the people working in NHS Wales. One of the privileges of this job has been that I have encountered so many examples from across Wales of first-class care for patients. At the Confederation, I have been determined that we help give this work the profile it deserves. At our last count, the number of written compliments from patients in Wales exceeded the number of complaints by around 18 to 1. These are levels of satisfaction that most organisations can only dream of.

"Yet if this is the reality, how is it that the reputation of the NHS sometimes doesn't match up? This brings me to my second observation which is that delivering a 21st century NHS in Wales desperately needs a 21st century approach to communications. The NHS has the largest workforce in the land, it is constantly in the political and media spotlight, and it arouses public affections and passions in a way that few other organisations are ever likely to match. Our communications officers put in heroic efforts, but the NHS still often regards communications as an optional extra. Yet, as Ben Page from MORI warned at our recent conference, we neglect it at our peril.

"Finally, it is clear to me that if the Confederation didn't exist, it would need to be invented. That's how indispensable it has become. For starters it provides a single voice for the NHS in Wales. Politicians, policymakers, journalists all look to the Confederation for information, briefing and answers on what the NHS in Wales thinks. The Confederation also helps shape the overall debate about health, for example shifting the focus away from beds and buildings and highlighting neglected areas such as chronic conditions. It brings people together from across the health community, to inject fresh thinking and strengthen relationships. These are just some of the roles that the Confederation carries out. And all of them are essential.

"I'd like to say thanks to all our members: trusts and LHBs. The simple fact is that without their support we are nothing. I would also like to thank my colleagues for all their support through the last seven years. This well-knit team of just five has been the foundation for all our achievements. So thanks to Sandra, Jon and Tegan, and of course to Mike. I know there is lots more that the Confed can achieve, and Siân Owen, who is joining the team, will be an enormous asset in helping them deliver. Together, as a team, we play a crucial role in helping make our health services fit for the 21st century. And I will always be enormously proud to have been a part of it."

Kevin Sullivan

## www.welshconfed.org - number of hits keep on growing

Use of our website continues to grow, with our latest analysis showing that it has received over 280,000 hits since it was redesigned in November 2006. These have come not just from Wales but countries as diverse as Germany, Australia, India, Canada, South Africa and the Seychelles! The site is easy to use. You can read and download a wide range of Confederation publications and other key health documents. You can get details of our events, and look at – and in some cases listen to – presentations from previous events. And our links will take you straight to other relevant sites, including all NHS organisations in Wales. This month's most downloaded documents are:

- A Brief Guide to Successful Community Engagement
- More than just a press release

## New office - reminder

Some of the Confederation's mail is still being sent to our old offices in Cardiff Bay. If you haven't done so already, please update your contact list with our new address:

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