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27 June 2008

Issue 67

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

Restructuring consultation response

The Confederation's official response to proposals to restructure the NHS has been submitted to the Minister. In our response, we:

- Supported the concept of a national board in the form of a special health authority
- Acknowledged the need to reduce the number of health bodies
- Stated the case for more priority to be given to out-of-hospital care
- Discussed the idea of a single organisation integrating LHBs and Trusts to break down organisational barriers and improve continuity of care
- Emphasised that the new organisations must have clear links with the community to strengthen accountability to the people they serve.

Our full response is available on our website at:

<http://www.welshconfed.org/companyData/1898/resources/NHS%20Structures.pdf>

Supporting the Ambulance Trust

The progress review of the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust and the Minister's accompanying statement has been widely covered in the press and media. The Confederation provided comments to the media in support of the strong leadership and direction provided by the Trust's management, and the progress they have made in improving services and dealing with the legacy of the past. We will continue to monitor coverage of the Ambulance Trust and where necessary, we will brief journalists and offer comments to explain the issues the Trust will face in meeting the challenging targets that have now been set.

Mental health proposals

As one consultation period comes to a close, we are now turning our attention to another. We are working on a response to proposals for an all-Wales mental health trust, as outlined in the Michael Williams review and will circulate a draft response to our members soon.

Annual Conference 2008

Bookings are now being taken for our Annual Conference on 6-7 November at City Hall, Cardiff. Among our list of high profile speakers are:

- Rhodri Morgan, First Minister
- Roger Lewis, Group Chief Executive, WRU
- Baroness Rennie Fritchie DBE, management consultant

For more information, please see our brochure and booking form on our website at:

<http://www.welshconfed.org/WelshAnnualConference2008.htm>

Delegates are strongly advised to book accommodation as soon as possible as the Wales v South Africa rugby international takes place in Cardiff that weekend.

Westminster visit

Our Director, Mike Ponton and Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Jonathan Davies, visited the Welsh Parliamentary Labour Party in Westminster recently to discuss the NHS in Wales. The meeting was a valuable opportunity to explain the proposed structural changes from a management perspective and clarify some of the issues MPs raised.



Briefed AMs on top-up fees

A recent Assembly debate on the issue of co-payments in the NHS highlighted some important and thought-provoking issues on whether patients should have the ability to “top-up” their care with privately paid-for treatment. The Confederation sent a briefing to all Assembly Members outlining the key issues. Many of the points in our briefing were used by AMs to inform the debate, and we were thanked in plenary by Plaid Cymru health spokesperson, Helen Mary Jones, and South Wales Central AM, David Melding for our contribution.

Public Service Ombudsman for Wales

We met recently with the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales to discuss recent high profile cases concerning NHS Trusts and Local Health Boards. We presented the viewpoint of the NHS organisations involved and had a constructive discussion on how we could work together more effectively in the future.

Participation Cymru

The Confederation has been invited by the WCVA to join the board of Participation Cymru, a joint project between public sector bodies in Wales to build knowledge and expertise of public engagement work. This is a key topic for the Confederation and we are looking forward to the opportunity to share experience with other organisations on this important subject.

Partnership working with WIHSC

We have been working closely with Professors Donna Mead and Marcus Longley of the Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care, with an aim to working in partnership on topical issues in the coming months. We are currently discussing topics of mutual interest for future work, which could include mental health services, governance and public engagement.

Media work

With our response to restructuring plans now submitted, we are working with key health journalists to brief them on our position. We have met with BBC Wales health correspondent, Hywel Griffith, to discuss our vision for the future direction of the NHS and we will be meeting with Madeleine Brindley, health editor of the Western Mail, for a similar discussion early in July.

UK Conference

The UK NHS Confederation held their annual conference on June 18-20th in Manchester. A record 2000 delegates attended the conference, entitled “*Delivering the future today*”, which focussed on future challenges for the NHS.

BMA Conference

Our Director, Mike Ponton, spoke at a BMA Conference on the proposals to restructure the NHS. It was a useful opportunity to hear a wide range of views on future direction of the NHS and represent the views of Trusts and LHBs in the discussions.

Meeting with the Health Minister

Mike Ponton attended a meeting with the Minister and the Local Government and LHB Strategic Partnership Liaison Group. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss joint strategic issues relating the proposed restructuring of the Welsh NHS. A key outcome was a request from the Minister to produce a joint paper outlining proposals for securing citizen engagement in the future organisations.

THE **WELSH NHS** CONFEDERATION
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