



NHS Newsweek 19/02/10

Trust to sell Victorian hospital in Bowdon

A Victorian hospital is being sold off by NHS bosses to help pay for a 21st Century facility nearby. St Anne's Hospital in Bowdon, Greater Manchester, opened in 1885 and was originally a specialist unit for the care of patients with tuberculosis. But the site has been empty since 2004 when its last remaining services were transferred to other locations. Trafford Healthcare NHS Trust will use proceeds of the sale to help build the new Altrincham General Hospital. The trust had kept the land in case it was needed as a temporary home for Altrincham General while its new building was being constructed.

Source of Extract: BBC News

Obese patients costing NHS in Wales £500m a year

Obese Welsh patients who go on to develop diabetes are costing the NHS in Wales almost £500m a year. Figures released by charity Diabetes UK Cymru show 9% of the population have type 2 diabetes – a condition closely associated with obesity. A study carried out by the charity shows more than 146,000 people in Wales have been diagnosed with the condition, a total which is expected to double in the next 25 years. It is also estimated that 50,000 more people have the condition but have not yet been diagnosed. Experts say the condition has almost quadrupled in the last 20 years because we are eating fattier foods and exercising less. The chronic condition is linked with a raft of serious complications, including heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, limb amputation and blindness.

Source of Extract: Wales Online

Pay rises contribute to £8.5m health overspend

Staff pay rises and the cost of sending patients to the UK for treatment are being blamed for the Isle of Man's £8.5m health overspend. The Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) has issued details of its shortfall as minister Eddie Teare prepares to ask Tynwald for the cash. Mr Teare said the department was unable to absorb the added costs without cutting frontline services.

Source of Extract: BBC News

George Osborne: Conservatives would allow public services to run co-operatives

George Osborne, the shadow chancellor, has outlined a Conservative pledge to let public sector workers form "co-operatives" to take control of public services like primary education and NHS nursing. As part of a Conservative pre-election appeal to Labour-leaning public sector staff, Mr Osborne said a Tory government would offer a "power-shift to public sector workers". The move could allow teachers and nurses to remove underperforming managers and take over the running of schools and hospitals themselves. "This is as big a transfer of power to working people since the sale of council house homes in the 1980s," Mr Osborne told BBC Radio Four's Today programme.

Source of Extract: Telegraph and BBC Radio Four Today's programme

Doctors on Merseyside last night warned the NHS faced a "grim future" as the service braced itself for up to £20bn cuts over the next five years

Medics called for plans to be drawn up to cope with financial pressures that are expected to continue up to 2017. It is understood the cuts would mean each Merseyside hospital and health trust receiving 2.3% less in real terms,

unless new funds are found. Local NHS bosses are looking at a raft of measures to cut spending including reducing "inappropriate use" of emergency services and reducing public waste of prescription drugs. Rob Barnett, Liverpool Local Medical Committee chair, said Derek Machin, British Medical Association representative for Merseyside, said if innovative plans to save money were not drawn up patients would suffer as staff were laid off and services deteriorated.

Source of Extract: Liverpool Daily Post

NHS managers numbers rise at twice rate of doctors, report finds

Numbers of senior managers in the NHS have almost doubled in a decade compared with a 35 per cent increase in doctors and nurses as 'fixation' with the market means health service is bogged down in red tape, a report said. The British Medical Association highlighted the figures as it launched a campaign to 'Look after our NHS' and end the commercialisation of the health service, with treatments contracted out to independent healthcare providers. Official data shows that since 1995 the number of senior managers has increased by 91 per cent while the combined numbers of doctors and nurses rose by just 35 per cent. Other 'market driven' health care policies have wasted around £220 million since 2003 as private companies were given contracts to carry out operations on NHS patients which included clauses that they would be paid for a set number of procedures even if they were not carried out. The report published by the BMA found only 85 per cent of the operations contracted for with the Independent Sector Treatment Centres were actually carried out as fewer patients opted for private treatment than anticipated and instead preferred to wait for surgery within the NHS. The quality of surgery in these centres has also been questioned with one coroner dubbing an ISTC 'a Mickey Mouse outfit' after a patient bled to death after a routine gallbladder operation, the report said. The government's private finance hospitals are also a costly mistake with over 100 new hospital schemes, valued at £10.9 billion, but set to cost the taxpayer £62.6 billion by the time the final payments are made in 2048. The new GP-led health centres which ministers said each NHS area must have, are paid three times more per patient than a traditional practice, the report said.

Source of Extract: Telegraph

NHS Bristol say new hospital will be completed

Bristol residents are being reassured that the new hospital in the south of the City will be completed despite previous concerns about funding for the project. NHS Bristol have confirmed that contracts for the 45 million pound community hospital in Hengrove Park have now been exchanged, prompting a spokesperson to say there's now 'no going back' with the plans. NHS Bristol says the signing of contracts follows an intensive period in which final legal and financial details were finalised after approval was given by the Department of Health last November. Building work is now expected to start within a few weeks and the new hospital should be ready to open its doors in spring of 2012.

Source of Extract: JackFM

NHS hospitals ignore patient safety orders

Hospitals were accused tonight of putting patients' lives at unnecessary risk after research revealed they were failing to comply with NHS orders designed to prevent deaths from mistakes involving drugs, surgery or equipment. Information released by the Department of Health after a freedom of information request showed that hospitals were not complying with safety alerts issued by the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA). The NPSA's chairman, Lord Patel of Dunkeld, told the Guardian that the behaviour of the trusts was unacceptable and endangered the health of patients.

Source of Extract: The Guardian

NHS to re-examine plan for £26m day case unit

Health officials are to re-examine the costs of a proposed £26 million day services centre at Raigmore Hospital which would enable non-emergency surgery patients to be sent home immediately after their operation. NHS Highland is the only mainland health board area in Scotland not to have a dedicated hospital day case unit. The

move, to examine more affordable options for the long-awaited unit comes amid warnings that more wards at the hospital could close with the health board facing the most challenging financial squeeze for a decade. An outline business case was prepared four years ago for a purpose-built three-theatre centre, regarded as essential and long overdue, costing £10.5 million to handle 52 per cent of the hospital's elective surgery cases. But in 2007, it was agreed to expand the project to a four-theatre complex with the aim of it being in use by May this year. Since then, the costs have risen to £26.2 million while the anticipated opening has slipped back to 2012. But with the cash-strapped board now seeking to make savings of more than £14 million in the next financial year - including more than £4 million at Raigmore - the costs of the proposed day services centre are being reviewed.

Source of Extract: Inverness Courier

NHS drops £29m surgery unit plan for Dewsbury

Plans for a £29m surgical centre at a West Yorkshire hospital have been shelved because of "financial challenges" within the NHS. NHS Kirklees said it was "extremely disappointed" it could not build the unit at Dewsbury and District Hospital. The centre would have provided care to patients who need kidney or bladder surgery or surgery for bowel and lower intestinal cancer. Two specialist units planned for Wakefield will still go ahead. NHS Kirklees said it was not possible to continue with the plans "in light of the current economic climate and the financial challenges now facing the NHS nationally".

Source of Extract: BBC News

Plea for more NHS care at home

The NHS should make a "decisive shift" towards providing more care in people's homes, Health Secretary Andy Burnham has said. Annual savings of £2.7 billion and better outcomes for patients could be achieved if more services are offered in the community, Mr Burnham said. He highlighted a Government aspiration to provide dialysis in people's homes as an example of how the NHS could reach out to patients. According to the Department of Health, around 7,000 patients across England could benefit from home dialysis - removing the need for regular long visits to hospital. Prime Minister Gordon Brown unveiled the pledge earlier this month, alongside plans to offer cancer sufferers free home care from specialist nurses and to allow patients access to chemotherapy without going to a hospital.

Source of Extract: Press Association

Govt calls for more detailed alcohol labeling

Just 15 per cent of alcoholic drinks provide consumers with enough information about units and health risks, according to the Department of Health. The government has called for clearer labelling on alcohol to help Brits make more informed choices with regards to drinking on a regular basis. A report from the NHS Confederation and the Royal College of Physicians revealed that treating alcohol-related conditions cost the NHS approximately £2.7 billion in 2006-07, almost double the figure reported in 2001.

Source of Extract: Active Quote

Consultations at Banbury Health Centre cost the NHS five times more than at standard GP surgeries, it has been claimed

The centre, which was opened last year, offers a range of services and is operated by a private company. Oxfordshire Local Medical Committee said it believed the new centre was paid about £140 per consultation, compared to an average of just £26. The Local Medical Committee (LMC), which represents local GPs, said the figure of £140 was based on an estimate of patient numbers. NHS Oxfordshire said the true figure was substantially lower.

Source of Extract: BBC News

Campaigners launch pre-emptive strike against NHS closures

Campaigners and trade unions have vowed to oppose any plans to close or downgrade services at hospitals in south west London. The move comes amid speculation over the introduction of polyclinics in the capital and the affect they will have on existing NHS services. Last month a report by the London region of the BMA warns that patients in London will lose out if many existing district general hospitals are downgraded to local hospitals that have been stripped of key services. Senior NHS managers want to take the direct patients to cheaper and more appropriate services which could mean some smaller hospitals are converted into GP-led polyclinics. Campaigners says leaks from the South West London Review show that the favoured plan is to retain St George's Hospital in Tooting as the only major acute hospital unit in the area with Kingston, St Helier in Sutton and Mayday in Croydon seeing key services either closed or downgraded as they become satellites of St George's. The South West London NHS Campaign is supported by Unison health branches, the BMA, local trades councils and pressure group London Health Emergency.

Source of Extract: OnMedica

£15m scheme for two new GP surgeries plus walk-in centre

Building work is set to begin early next month on two multi-million pound GP surgeries in Doncaster. One of them will be Doncaster's first purpose-built four-storey health centre. When it opens in winter 2011 it will be the new home for Doncaster's "walk-in" health centre, which is open every day from 8am to 8pm and is currently based at Devonshire House on South Parade. Meanwhile, a new £7m health centre in Conisbrough will be built on the site of the existing health centre, providing modern accommodation for the two existing family doctor practices as well as district nursing, a minor operations unit and a pharmacy. The two new developments will be the latest by Doncaster Community Solutions, a company jointly owned by NHS Doncaster, Doncaster Council and the private company Community Solutions for Primary Care. Over the last five years the company has also built health centres in Askern, Denaby, Edlington, Hatfield, Intake, Moorends and Thorne, at a combined cost of £30m.

Source of Extract: Yorkshire Post

Up to 200 beds at two hospitals are going to close to save money, Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has announced

The trust, which runs Gloucestershire Royal and Cheltenham General hospitals, said it has to save between £27m and £30m in the 2010/ 11 financial year. The first phase will see 95 beds close in four wards at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital from 1 April. The first phase of closures will be in a rehabilitation ward, Ward 2A, Acute Care Unit B and Neurology. A Unison spokesman said he was "dismayed" at the announcement. The prospective savings represent a 6.5% reduction on the previous year's budget. The staff at the hospitals, which have 1,128 in-patient beds, were told the news earlier this week.

Source of Extract: BBC News

A controversial private funding scheme to build hospitals has wasted up to £52billion

Figures uncovered by the Liberal Democrats show the National Health Service is facing a £63billion bill for £11billion worth of privately financed hospitals over the next three decades. The figures, buried in Treasury reports, also reveal the amount of money which will have to be repaid to private companies will rise by 30 per cent over the next five years, equating to about £7billion by 2015. More than 100 NHS buildings have been paid for by the companies at a cost of £11billion. However, they have often charged exceptionally high interest rates. The research reveals the most expensive contract was for Wythenshawe Hospital in Manchester, where the NHS will pay back 16 times the original capital value by April 2036. Other PFI deals that have left hospitals with big repayments include Queens Hospital in Romford, Essex, which cost £238million to build with a final cost due to PFI of £2.5billion and the John Radcliffe Hospital at Oxford, which cost £134million with a final tag of £832million.

Source of Extract: Daily Express

NHS Hospital to be run by private business

The trust which runs Addenbrooke's has withdrawn its bid to run Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. The decision by Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust means the Huntingdon centre will be the first in the UK to be run by a private company. The five remaining contenders are: Care UK (Partnership Health Group Ltd), Circle Health, Interhealth Canada (UK) Ltd, Ramsay Health Care UK and Serco Health. The successful partner will take over the operation of the hospital, which has debts of nearly £40 million, while staff and assets will remain with the NHS. A spokesman for the Cambridge trust said its priority had been to protect services at Addenbrooke's and at the Rosie Maternity Hospital.

Source of Extract: Cambridge News

Tories 'not attending' talks on future of elderly care

The Conservatives are refusing to take part in a conference about the future of social care in England, as they say the summit is a "political ploy". Labour and the Lib Dems will join care providers and charities in talks over options for a national care service. Many are likely to tell ministers a compulsory fee would be the best funding option, the BBC understands. Government "age champion" Dame Joan Bakewell attacked politicians for "political point scoring" on the issue. The Tories have dubbed the idea a "death tax".

Source of Extract: BBC News
