



## NHS Newsweek 26/02/10

### Mid Staffs NHS Trust was 'neglectful'

Relatives of people whose lives were put at risk by being "routinely neglected" by Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust have demanded to know how it could happen, given the supposedly high level of quality control and inspection the NHS is subjected to. An independent inquiry has ruled that the trust, which runs Stafford Hospital, was more interested in saving money and reaching targets than it was in providing a decent level of care to patients. The inquiry suggested 18 changes that the trust and the government should put into place to improve services and prevent the same thing happening again. Previously the Healthcare Commission had said that because the emphasis was on achieving foundation trust status, patients were neglected to the point that they had to drink vase water to prevent dehydration. Between 2005 and 2008 up to 1200 more of the trust's patients died than would be expected.

Source of Extract: *Public Service.co.uk*

### Key findings of inquiry

- Patients were systematically neglected as the Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust worked on target-hitting to win special foundation trust status.
- Relatives told the independent inquiry of the degrading treatment of elderly patients
- Those staff who tried to blow the whistle on poor care were not listened to.
- Management thinking was dominated by the need to cut costs, particularly when it hit a financial crisis at the end of 2006/07 and needed to save £10m. Staff cuts and shortages were the result.
- Chief Executive Mike Yeates, who stepped down last March, described the culture as "inwardly focused and complacent, resistant to change and accepting of poor standards"
- The government accepts all 18 recommendations and has asked Monitor to consider taking away the trust's foundation status.
- Health Secretary Andy Burnham and Prime Minister Gordon Brown blame managers for the failures.
- Doctors and other healthcare staff may now be disciplined.
- A working group is to try to work out a new simple standardised mortality rate for hospitals which patients and relatives can understand.

Source: *Guardian online*

### NHS should stop funding homeopathy, say MPs

The NHS should stop funding all homeopathic medicine, the House of Commons science watchdog said yesterday. The cross-party group said there was no evidence that homeopathic remedies had anything other than a placebo effect. The NHS spends about £4 million a year on homeopathy, paying for prescriptions and supporting the running of four homeopathic hospitals. Phil Willis, the chairman of the Science and Technology Select Committee, said that government policies on homeopathy were not based on sound evidence.

Source of Extract: *The Times*

### Wales' seven new NHS boards set to be £43m over budget

The seven new health boards which run the NHS in Wales are set to go more than £43m over budget, according to research by BBC Wales. Six are forecasting a deficit for the end of their first financial year, with all under pressure to make savings. When they were set up in October 2009, Health Minister Edwina Hart said that they "must live within their means". The boards control all hospitals and community services, GP and dentist funding.

Source of Extract: *BBC News*

### Rise in demand for treatment hits York Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

The cost of providing secondary care within York Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is expected to be £3.3 million more than originally expected at the end of the current financial year. But with NHS North Yorkshire and York battling to reduce a potential £8 million deficit, papers going before its board reveal it is challenging how these costs have arisen. Although the PCT hopes "informal negotiations" will thrash out an agreement, it admits independent arbitration methods may be needed if the talks break down.

Source of Extract: *York Press*

## **NHS labouring from 'understaffing epidemic', study claims**

The NHS is suffering from an 'understaffing epidemic' as UK hospitals continue to struggle to cope with the introduction of the European working time directive (EWTD), a new study has claimed. The British Medical Association (BMA) surveyed some 1,500 doctors during the six months since the introduction of the EWTD in August last year. Researchers discovered seven out of ten rota vacancies reported were for junior doctors who have completed their foundation training years and that four out of ten vacancies were for experienced specialist trainees with at least five years of experience. The survey also discovered that frontline services like emergency medicine were hardest hit with six out of ten doctors working in emergency departments reporting vacancies on their rotas.

*Source of Extract: inthenews.co.uk*

## **NHS accused of buying 'unethical' surgical equipment**

The British Medical Association has claimed that surgical equipment used by the NHS may be exploiting child labour in its manufacture. The BMA has published guidance for doctors in England shedding light on evidence that NHS instruments are being made in developing countries, raising concerns over the ethical purchase of goods by the health service. Following its publication in England, the BMA will urge the Scottish government to adopt similar guidance.

*Source of Extract: NursingTimes.net*

## **Call for more NHS mental health care for prisoners**

More must be done to provide expert care to prisoners with severe mental illnesses, a study suggests. Treating prisoners in secure hospitals can help save £600,000 in re-offending costs, but not enough are getting help, analysts Laing and Buisson said. The lifetime savings includes costs associated with police time, emotional harm caused to victims and legal fees as well as the bill for the NHS care. The government said steps were being taken to improve access to care. It is estimated that 1.5% of the 80,000-plus prison population in England and Wales at any one time has conditions severe enough, such as schizophrenia, that require hospital treatment. But latest figures suggest less than half of these actually get it. If all these prisoners were to get help, the lifetime saving would add up to £1bn.

*Source of Extract: BBC News*

## **Extraordinary meeting over Kingston Hospital A+E threat**

An extraordinary meeting has been called to discuss the threat of closure or downgrading of accident and emergency and maternity units at Kingston Hospital. Kingston will lose at least one major service in 16 out of 18 options being looked at by a review of south-west London, according to a document leaked to Edward Davey, Kingston and Surbiton's Liberal Democrat MP. Kingston's influential health overview and scrutiny panel of councillors will interrogate senior figures from the NHS. Mr Davey and Susan Kramer, MP for Richmond Park, will be able to ask questions to the NHS publicly for the first time since they launched their Save Kingston Hospital campaign.

*Source of Extract: Kingston Guardian*

## **Hinchingbrooke in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, lost its only NHS bidder**

The withdrawal has opened the way for one of five private health providers to take control and become a private operator of the general hospital. Once the contract is awarded by the East of England health authority, Hinchingbrooke will become the first NHS hospital of its kind in Britain to be operated by a private firm. The hospital has been labelled as "debt-ridden" with a deficit of around £40 million, but Unison head of health Karen Jennings claimed the debt is "no worse than many other trusts" which are bogged down in private contracts. Broken promises from Cambridgeshire PCT to refer patients to Hinchingbrooke's "£22 million" treatment centre, which was funded through the private finance initiative at an eventual cost of £93 million, left the hospital with an underused facility and a long-term bill.

*Source of Extract: Morning Star*

## **NHS cuts feared after flu spending**

Health Secretary Andy Burnham mounted a strong defence of Government spending on swine flu as the Tories warned NHS capital projects could be cut to pay for unused vaccines. It came as a Commons written statement showed that the Department of Health had transferred £200 million from its capital budget to its revenue budget to "meet existing commitments on pandemic flu". During Commons question time, Mr Burnham said 38 million swine flu vaccines had so far been provided to the UK by drug firms GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and Baxter Healthcare. Shadow health secretary Andrew Lansley said: "You said you have 38 million doses, we've used five million. How much is going to be the total cost of the procurement of these vaccines and what are going to be the cuts in capital projects now in the NHS to pay for that?" Mr Burnham admitted that the Government had "secured a surplus" but there would still be a need for vaccines in the future. He said: "While we have secured a surplus, this strain H1N1 is likely to replace the seasonal flu as the main strain this year. We will continue to have a need for this vaccine going forward.

*Source of Extract: Press Association*

## **NHS chiefs told to slash spending by £1bn**

Health bosses have been ordered to slash spending plans for the NHS in Greater Manchester by almost £1bn. The need for savings is expected to impact on 'every aspect of health care' bringing job cuts and changes to services. The need for savings is expected to impact on 'every aspect of health care' bringing job cuts and changes to services. As a result regional health bosses have told Greater Manchester's ten primary care trusts that they must save £950m over the next four years.

Source of Extract: Manchester Evening News

### **NHS offers £15 gifts to Herefordshire quitters**

Smokers in Herefordshire are being encouraged to quit smoking with £15 "bribes", including health spa visits and bowling vouchers. Stub Buddies rewards 28 days of non-smoking with a list of rewards offered by NHS Herefordshire. Quitters take a carbon monoxide breath-test to show they have steered clear of cigarettes. Director of public health Akeem Ali said rewards "work out much cheaper than treating chronic health problems".

Source of Extract: BBC News

### **Hull health services to transfer to social enterprise after review dropped**

Frontline health services in Hull will be transferred to a social enterprise following the withdrawal of a judicial review. Hull Primary Care Trust (PCT) was one of the first 20 to develop a social enterprise, City Health Care Partnership, through the Department of Health's 'right to request' initiative. The PCT has been working towards the social enterprise model since 2006 and has been a 'pathfinder' project for DH. Through right to request, it hoped to transfer services such as health visiting and district nursing. But Social Enterprise reported in its latest issue of the magazine that Hull's plans were on hold because of the review, brought by a member of the public against the transfer of the PCT's provider arm to a community interest company. NHS Hull was told last week that the claim for judicial review had been withdrawn and the issue no longer needed to go to court. Around 1,200 employees will transfer to City Health Care Partnership under protected terms and conditions, leaving NHS Hull as the commissioning organisation with a around 300 staff. The target date for complete separation is 1 June 2010.

Source of Extract: Social Enterprise News

### **London GPs helping patients opt out of huge NHS database**

GPs in London are helping patients to opt out of digital care records, in a move that could present a major threat to the central part of the £12.7 billion National Programme for IT. As the controversial rollout of summary care records continues in London, under England's £12.7 billion NHS National Programme for IT, doctors are providing alternative information from that sent officially send to patients by the NHS. A number of doctors and patients have raised strong objections to the programme. While the records are intended to provide out-of-hours hospital clinicians with crucial access to patient records, doctors' body the British Medical Association has heavily criticised the fact patients are automatically opted in, saying people needed to be "treated like adults".

Source of Extract: Computerworld UK

### **Rescue plan for ailing hospitals in doubt**

The government's aspiration for foundation trusts to take over failing hospitals appears in significant doubt, a month away from the deadline for agreeing the future for all acutes. Strategic health authorities and foundation trusts have expressed doubts about whether acquisition and merger will be a widespread solution, particularly by the March deadline. The warnings come after the announcement Mark Goldman is to step down as Heart of England Foundation Trust Chief Executive, three years after leading the only acquisition of a hospital by a foundation.

Source of Extract: HSJ

### **Acute trusts could 'take over' general practice, warns Londonwide LMCs**

Dr Michelle Drage, joint Chief Executive of Londonwide LMCs, believes all practices in the capital will be expected to become part of a polysystem and acute trusts will shape what services they provide. After a two-month investigation by Londonwide LMCs, Dr Drage believes PCTs in the capital are under particular SHA pressure to shift hospital work towards GPs working in 'polysystems' and 'vertically integrate' community services with the acute sector. Dr Drage predicts the 31 PCTs in London will be formally merged into five commissioning 'sectors' next year, leading to a 'further blurring of primary care'. Foundations trusts and the acute sector are now a greater threat to general practice than the commercial sector, said Dr Drage. She urged practices to 'pull together in networks and federate' to protect themselves against the threat.

Source of Extract: Healthcare Republic

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