



NHS Newsweek 18/06/10

NHS chairman knighted in honours

A key figure in healthcare in the East of England over the last four years has been knighted in the Queen's Birthday honours. Keith Pearson, of Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, chairman until last month of NHS East of England, has been honoured for services to healthcare. Sir Neil McKay, chief executive of NHS East of England, praised his work. He said Mr Pearson's passion and knowledge from his business career had helped improve the NHS in the region. Mr Pearson was chair of the NHS East of England since its creation in 2006 until May 2010 when he became chair of the NHS Confederation.

Source of Extract: BBC News

Liaison 's Payroll service recovers £1m for the NHS

Payroll is one of the largest spends in the NHS and Liaison has now taken the decision to expand its Payroll Review service to include all government organisations. Since expanding our services to include Payroll Reviews as part of our forensic services, Liaison has recovered £1m on behalf of the NHS. Liaison will be promoting our forensic services at the NHS Confederation Conference in Liverpool next week and again at the HFMA Conferences taking place the following week in Birmingham. If you are attending any of these conferences please visit our stand where our Directors will be happy to discuss our cash recovery services with you.

Source of Extract: Liaison

MSP's concern over proposed health cuts

An MSP has expressed deep concern about proposed health service cuts in NHS Ayrshire and Arran. Cunninghame South MSP Irene Oldfather said figures estimated there would be a reduction of 112 in staff levels. Most of them – up to 74 – would come from the nursing and midwifery sector, she said. Scotland is expected to lose more than 3700 health workers.

Source of Extract: Irvine News

Operations to be rationed as NHS claws back £65m

Thousands of patients in London could be refused NHS treatment under plans to save millions of pounds. Health bosses are preparing to ration a series of basic procedures to help cut £65 million from the budget. The move means patients could be refused treatment for varicose veins, tonsil removal, jaw replacements and even expensive painkilling injections for back surgery. Until now NHS managers could only reject basic operation requests if they have no proven benefit, not on cost grounds. But documents obtained show finance chiefs are now targeting specific treatments to claw back the £65 million.

Source of Extract: Evening Standard

Nursing cuts spark fury at NHS plan

MSPs have questioned Government plans to spend £1.25 million on up to 50 new officers for patients' rights while hundreds of nursing posts are being axed. The positions are being created through the Scottish Government's Patients' Rights Bill which would provide legally binding guarantees on waiting times. Labour's David Whitton told Government officials at Holyrood's Finance Committee that health boards had raised concerns about the proposals for 40-50 new patient right officers (PROs).

Source of Extract: Press Association

£260,000 a week cost of NHS absence

Staff sickness is costing NHS Tayside more than £260,000 a week in wages and salaries alone. Stress is the most common reason for sickness absence while the least common recorded reason is "substance abuse" at just 0.02% of all sickness absences last year. However, the health authority's Chief Executive Professor Tony Wells last night said the substance abuse statistic "just doesn't ring true" and staff problems with alcohol and drugs may be hidden among "not known," the second most common reason recorded for sickness absence.

Source of Extract: The Courier

Malcolm Stamp quits Coventry trust

Malcolm Stamp has resigned as chief executive of University Hospitals of Coventry and Warwickshire Trust after 18 months. Mr Stamp said in a statement he had "decided to take a break from the cut and thrust of the day to day management of large acute hospitals" and would initially work at NHS West Midlands on equality and diversity.

Source of Extract: HSJ

Effective supply chain management could save NHS up to £300m

Supply Chain experts Sentient Health, says that the NHS could save £300m from improving supply chain management. A recent report undertaken by McKinsey on behalf of the Department of Health highlighted that "although significant savings have already been captured, there is still an opportunity, estimated at £1.1-1.9bn that could still be realised through more effective supply chain/ procurement management." Sentient Health, believe that £300m of the £1.1-1.9bn could be derived from supply chain improvements alone.

Source of Extract: bjhcim

Plans for new community hospital in Cockermouth

Plans have been submitted for a new community hospital in a Cumbrian town. The £11m facility in Cockermouth would replace the existing Isel Road building which is more than 100 years old, and include a GP service. A planning application has been put before Allerdale Borough Council, and a business case will be considered by the board of NHS Cumbria.

Source of Extract: BBC News

Private firms 'should share benefits of big hospital contracts with NHS'

The NHS should be allowed to share the benefits of "efficiencies" made by private companies who have won lucrative contracts to build and manage hospitals under the private finance initiative, according to report from the National Audit Office on Wednesday. The report into the performance of PFI in the health service praises the private sector for making savings but with the NHS being asked to find £20bn in efficiencies it recommends that

the government looks to recoup some of the money by renegotiating contracts – a move that would be fiercely resisted by the private sector. There are more than 70 operational PFI hospitals in England, costing around £900 million a year and with a capital value of more than £6bn. PFI contracts are awarded and managed by local health trusts with the private company building new hospitals and in some cases providing ancillary services such as catering, cleaning and portering. Amyas Morse, head of the National Audit Office, says that PFI hospital contracts are generally well-managed and achieving the value for money originally envisaged but calls on the department of health to ensure that "efficiencies are sought and that an appropriate share of benefit comes back to the public sector". There is also some concern over the expense associated with PFI contracts. The NAO says that while catering is on average slightly cheaper in PFI hospitals, hospitals with "PFI buildings spend more on maintenance annually to keep the buildings to a specified high standard". The idea of taking on the private sector over the costs of PFI has been rising up the political agenda.

Source of Extract: The Guardian

Fewer locums in Scottish hospitals 'could save NHS £6m'

Scottish hospitals could save £6m a year by using fewer agency doctors, according to a report. Audit Scotland said using locums, who can cost up to £104 an hour compared with £11 an hour for internal staff, could also compromise patient safety. The report came after it emerged the number of temporary doctors had soared in the past decade from 3,700 to 8,200. Health boards currently spend about £47m a year on recruiting medics for temporary staffing cover. Much of the bill was for commission paid to private agencies, which charge an average of 23% and sometimes more than 30%.

Source of Extract: BBC News

Surgery targets endanger patient safety, poll suggests

Pressures over hospital budgets and targets may be damaging safety in operating theatres, a survey suggests. About one in five of the nearly 600 surgeons questioned by Bournemouth University reported being involved in incidents, during a two-week period, where patients were harmed. Many complained of having to operate on patients they had not seen before, or a lack of time for complex operations. The government says "a culture of micromanagement" has endangered safety.

Source of Extract: BBC News

Hospital chiefs 'plan to cut 120 beds' – claim

More than 100 hospital beds could close across Worcestershire as recession-hit health bosses battle to claw back £60m. An NHS employee said he was aware of discussions at senior level to cut 120 beds in Worcestershire's acute and community hospitals.

Source of Extract: Worcester News

SNP highlights PFI debt for Scotland

It has been reported that the NHS in Scotland will lose over £6.7bn over the next 30 years to pay for privately funded building projects. The SNP highlighted the figure, which covers 27 capital projects that the party valued at just £1.28bn. In 2011, more than £200m a year will leave the NHS in repayments, hitting £281.5m in 2027 and in Lothian, the figures detailed payments of £26.2m for the £4m Findlay House. The figures were revealed as the Scottish government faces pressure to explain thousands of looming job cuts across the NHS, which Labour says will affect patient care.

Source of Extract: Project Datafile

Fear of two-tier IVF system as private clinics banned from NHS

Patients could be priced out of fertility treatment as one of Wales' leading clinics is forced to stop providing NHS-funded IVF. The London Women's Clinic, in Swansea, has been told its contract to provide NHS-funded IVF treatment will end next March as a One Wales pledge comes into force. From next year publicly-funded IVF cycles will only be provided by NHS organisations, under the Assembly Government rules.

Source of Extract: Wales Online

Coalition government axes £2bn of projects

The coalition government has cancelled 12 projects totalling £2bn agreed to by the previous Labour government since the start of 2010. Chief Secretary to the Treasury Danny Alexander said the cuts were necessary to tackle the budget deficit and would be done in a "fair" way. The 12 projects were axed - and a further 12 suspended - after a review of 217 projects worth £34bn was ordered, amid claims the previous Labour government had embarked on a pre-election "scorched earth" spending policy.

Source of Extract: BBC News

Newark Hospital to lose its A&E department

A Nottinghamshire town is to lose its accident and emergency unit, NHS bosses have announced. After months of argument health managers have decided to replace Newark's A and E Department with a minor injuries unit. Opposition to the plans had included a 5,000-name petition and human chain around the hospital. NHS Nottinghamshire County's Board said the changes would improve care for patients. The authority said the town will receive extra ambulance cover and more out-of-hours GP care.

Source of Extract: BBC News

PFI hospitals 'may have to cut services'

PFI contracts offer limited scope for savings, so they may have to be found elsewhere, according to a study from the National Audit Office. The NHS has to find efficiency savings of up to £20bn as part of wider cost-cutting aims. Thursday's report said: "It is likely that trusts will be expected to make efficiency savings over the next few years, but their ability to make savings from their PFI contracts is very limited. "Because trusts pay an index-linked fixed sum, it is difficult for them to make savings without cutting back on services. "Contractors who secure economies of scale through managing multiple PFI contracts are rarely required to share these efficiency gains with trusts. "Trusts need to ensure that any decision to reduce services is informed of the long-term consequences to costs and the impact on patients."

Source of Extract: HSJ