



NHS Newsweek 30/07/10

Liaison Dinner at Blenheim Palace

As part of The Independent Woodstock Literary Festival and in support of the Amani Children's Home in Tanzania, Liaison's Directors are hosting a VIP dinner in the Orangery at Blenheim Palace, Woodstock on Sunday 19th September. The evening will begin with a champagne reception at 6.30pm; Guest Speaker: Sir Max Hastings will be speaking prior to dinner on "Churchill as Warlord 1940 - 1945" followed by dinner at 7.30pm. If you and a guest would like to attend please contact Monica Allen: mallen@liaisonfs.com for details.

Four arm's length bodies being abolished

The NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, the Appointments Commission, the National Patient Safety Agency and the Alcohol Education Research Council are being abolished, it has been announced. The proposals are set out in a Department of Health review of arm's length bodies in an attempt to reduce bureaucracy and help to cut administrative costs by more than 45 per cent.

Source of Extract: HSJ

Secret plans drawn up for sweeping cuts

NHS bosses have drawn up secret plans for sweeping cuts to services, with restrictions on the most basic treatments for the sick and injured. Some of the most common operations — including hip replacements and cataract surgery — will be rationed as part of attempts to save billions of pounds, despite government promises that front-line services would be protected. Patients' groups have described the measures as "astonishingly brutal". An investigation by The Sunday Telegraph has uncovered widespread cuts planned across the NHS, many of which have already been agreed by senior health service officials. They include:

- Restrictions on basic and common operations, including hip and knee replacements, cataract surgery and orthodontic procedures.
- Plans to cut budgets for the terminally ill.
- The closure of nursing homes for the elderly.
- A reduction in acute hospital beds.
- Tighter rationing of NHS funding for IVF treatment and for obesity surgery.
- Thousands of job losses at NHS hospitals.
- Cost-cutting programmes in paediatric, maternity services and respite breaks to long-term carers.

Source of Extract: Telegraph

Tories say Labour wasted £300m on using private providers to cut NHS waiting times

The decision by Labour to bring private providers into the NHS wasted hundreds of millions of pounds of taxpayers' money, according to Andrew Lansley, the Conservative health secretary. The former government refused to disclose the amounts paid for the controversial "independent sector treatment centre programme" (ISTC), claiming it would "jeopardise the ability of the [Health] Department and the NHS to secure the best value for money". But Lansley has calculated that it would have been £300m cheaper if the NHS had carried out the work private contractors provided, such as cataract operations. Lansley said he was not against using independent sector providers but insisted they must compete on a level playing field and provide value for money.

Source of Extract: The Guardian

GP 'lottery' fears over health plans

A row over the future of the NHS in Redbridge is raging with fears government plans to give more power to GPs will turn doctors into bean-counters. Under proposals unveiled by health secretary Andrew Lansley last week, GPs will be made responsible for deciding how millions of pounds of NHS cash is spent day-to-day. The GP-led consortia will replace primary care trusts - including **NHS Redbridge** which will be axed in 2013 under the radical plans. But hitting out at the proposals, John Lister, director of pressure group Health Emergency, said: "Any GPs who really believe that they can deliver improved care for their patients in this type of health competitive market are kidding themselves.

Source of Extract: Ilford Recorder

Wales calls on the left to save services

Welsh Health Minister Edwina Hart told the Morning Star annual conference in Pontypridd this weekend that the assembly government must build more partnerships with trade unions to develop a united front to defend services. She said that the Westminster government's determination to abolish the NHS in England would put "clear pressures" on Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland because of cross-border relationships. Ms Hart stressed that there would be no compulsory redundancies in the health service in Wales "since compulsory redundancies show that you're not managing very well.

Source of Extract: Morning Star

New freedoms and fees set out for NHS trusts

New freedoms for NHS foundation trust hospitals, along with plans to charge both NHS and private health providers for regulation and oversight, were proposed on Monday by the government. In further consultation on the NHS white paper, Andrew Lansley, the health secretary, confirmed he is to limit how much foundation trust hospitals can earn in private income – a move that will be bitterly opposed by the health service unions.

Source of Extract: Financial Times

Stricter filter for PFI projects urged

A much tougher analysis of whether future PFI projects are value for money was called for this week by the National Audit Office. It said more public money may have to be put into such projects. The report stresses the difficulties the government faces to find £40bn - £50bn a year for infrastructure after the credit crunch. Its assessment that more public funds may be needed in order to ensure value clashes with government goals to cut the deficit and debt.

Source of Extract: Financial Times

Shropshire community health services to 'stay with NHS'

Plans to give control of community healthcare in Shropshire to an organisation outside the NHS have been scrapped. **Shropshire Primary Care Trust** board members have approved plans for the county's two PCTs to set up a single NHS trust to run services. The Unite and Unison unions have welcomed the decision not to pursue a social enterprise option.

Source of Extract: Shropshire BBC News

Emergency fund to pay for 'too expensive' cancer drugs

Cancer patients denied new treatments because they are too expensive will now be able to appeal to a £50m government fund to pay for their drugs – a move that experts said would "overturn" key recommendations by the NHS watchdog, NICE.

Source of Extract: The Guardian

Hartlepool hospital emergency unit to close

Staff at the University Hospital of Hartlepool have been told the accident and emergency department will be closed in the autumn. **North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust** said much of the work will move to the new £20m One Life centre on Park Road. Staff will be redeployed within the trust. A Unison union spokesperson said they were "concerned" by the plans. The University Hospital has said it will still deal with some 999 cases at its medical assessment unit.

Source of Extract: BBC News Tees

Norfolk and Suffolk health trusts look at merger plan

A Suffolk mental health trust has agreed to start merger talks with its neighbouring authority. **The Suffolk Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (SMHP)** is looking at merging with the **Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust**. The SMHP's board agreed to halt its existing application for NHS Foundation Trust status and look at the merger plan instead.

Source of Extract: BBC

Cornwall cancer patients welcome government's drug cash

Cancer patients and campaigners in Cornwall have welcomed a new national fund for life-saving treatments. Health Secretary Andrew Lansley has promised that £50m will be available "within weeks" ahead of the Cancer Drugs Fund planned for next year. It means cancer patients can access new drugs to help extend their lives by weeks or months or improve their quality of life. Cancer patients and campaigners in Cornwall have welcomed a new national fund for life-saving treatments. Rose Woodward from Kidney Cancer Support said she was delighted. "The worst thing in the world is being told you've got cancer and there is a drug that can help you, but you're not going to be allowed to have it," she told BBC News.

Source of Extract: BBC News South West

Flip-flops 'injure 200,000 a year' costing the NHS an astonishing £40m

The NHS spends £40million a year treating injuries caused by wearing the casual footwear. More than 200,000 people visit their GP or even end up in hospital every year after suffering falls or developing long-term problems. Once worn only at the beach, flip-flops have become the regular summer footwear of choice for many, with one in five women owning at least one pair. But experts are warning of the dangers of prolonged use, such as the risk of shin splints and joint pains.

Source of Extract: Mail Online

Foundation trust proposals raise tough borrowing question

The government has left wide open the question of whether foundation trusts will be able to finance major investments with commercial loans - and risk seeing their taxpayer funded property sold off if they default. Its consultation document Regulating Healthcare Providers, published this week, proposes scrapping "statutory controls" on foundations' borrowing. At present Monitor caps foundation borrowing and, crucially, they are banned from borrowing against most of their property, which is described as "protected assets".

Source of Extract: HSJ

NHS hospitals to be allowed to 'earn more money' from private patients

In the biggest shake-up of the NHS in a generation, all NHS hospitals are to become foundation trusts, or part of one, making them independent of Whitehall control. As part of the plans to encourage greater competition between NHS organisations and the private sector, foundation trusts could be allowed to earn more money by treating more private patients once they have fulfilled their obligations to the NHS, it has been announced. There are currently caps, which vary for each trust, on how much they can earn and this has proved a barrier to some organisations becoming foundation trusts, because they already earned too much from private patients. It has also hampered those already in existence from expanding services and investing in their buildings and equipment. In addition the Department of Health is consulting on whether limits on how much money they can borrow should be scrapped. This would allow foundation trusts to raise more capital for new buildings or expansion. The document said it was not fair that the private and voluntary sectors could borrow money without restrictions yet the NHS was being asked to compete with these organisations without similar freedoms. If a trust borrowed more than it could afford, the financial regulator, Monitor, would step in.

Source of Extract: Daily Telegraph

Leeds NHS health bosses face axe

More than 130 NHS management jobs in Leeds are being cut in a bid to save £5m – though the entire organisation is set to be axed eventually. **NHS Leeds**, which pays for health services for the city's population, needs to lose 134 posts over the next three years and is planning for redundancies. Staff numbers will be cut by workers leaving and voluntary redundancies, but compulsory job losses have not been ruled out. The latest planned job cuts come after Leeds hospitals said it was to reduce its workforce by 700 and the city's mental health trust is to cut numbers by 300. Hospitals in Wakefield, Pontefract and Dewsbury need to find £55m savings, which could hit hundreds of jobs.

Source of Extract: Yorkshire Evening News

New walk-in health centre opens doors

A new drop-in health clinic has opened its doors in Scarborough's town centre. The Castle Health Centre has now moved into the former Scarborough Building Society premises. The GP-led centre, which is situated next to a new Boots pharmacy store, will provide patient appointments and a walk-in service from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week. Tricia Kennerley, healthcare public affairs director from Alliance Boots, said: "We are very much looking forward to working together with our new partners in providing these essential services to the Scarborough community." The Boots pharmacy will be open from 8am to 8pm Monday to Saturday.

Source of Extract: Scarborough Evening News

60 jobs hang in balance as axe falls on health agencies

Sixty workers face an uncertain future after South Cambridgeshire MP and Health Secretary Andrew Lansley scrapped an agency. The Health Protection Agency (HPA), which has its regional headquarters in Chivers Way, Histon, will be abolished in a drive to cut costs. There will be no immediate redundancies and the organisation's functions will be transferred to the Department of Health. But the eventual number of jobs that will go at the agency, which protects the public from infectious diseases and environmental hazards, is yet to be determined.

Source of Extract: Cambridge News