

Branch Meeting

**Tuesday
27th
April
6.30 p.m.**

STUC
333 Woodlands Road
Glasgow
G3 6NG



Gail Cartmail, Amicus head of health, addressing last month's conference of NHS reps in Scotland.

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- **Regional Equality Forums**
- **Book Review**
- **Devolution diversifies health care**

Glasgow Health Board in Financial Crisis

The worst kept secret of 2004 must be that Greater Glasgow NHS Board has a severe cash problem. What is not clear, however, is the exact extent of the problem and, very importantly, just what does the Board intend to do about it? Behind the scenes crisis talks appear unlikely to yield much comfort either to the Board's long suffering staff or to the people of Glasgow and surrounding areas.

Unless the Scottish Health Department is prepared to find a very substantial recurring sum

then Glasgow's health board is going to have to take some very tough decisions that will have a significantly detrimental effect on the provision of healthcare to a population with one of the worst health records in Europe.

Disturbing rumours of large scale job losses, consolidation of laboratory services onto a single site, privatisation of the estates and maintenance functions are just some of the stories going round. When will the health board let us know just what is going on?

Agenda for Delay?

The biggest shake-up in health service staff's terms and conditions the so-called 'Agenda for Change' is progressing at a rate very much slower than predicted. Last year, some of the unions (e.g. the RCN) approved implementation of the package. Others, including Amicus and Unison, were more cautious and opted for allowing some early implementer sites to proceed and would then ballot their members when the impact of the new conditions at the early implementers was known.

Unfortunately, progress has been slow—both at the national level in the production of benchmark job profiles and at the early implementers in allocating staff to the new pay bands. Additionally, fears over the impact of out of hours payments for some staff have not been resolved. Accordingly the Amicus and Unison have postponed their ballots (due originally in June) until late September. Agenda for Change's official implementation date remains 1st October 2004.

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Regional equality forums

The union's new rule book contains provisions for Regional Equality Forums. Accordingly, the following meetings have been organised within Scotland. They will take place in the Amicus Office, John Smith House, 145-165 West Regent Street, Glasgow as follows:

- Young members (aged 21 or below): Saturday 17th April at 11.00 am
- Black & ethnic minority members: Saturday 17th April at 10.00 am
- Disabled members: Saturday 24th April at 10.00 am
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members (LGBT): Saturday 24th April at 11.00 am

Interested members should confirm their attendance by contacting the Regional Equalities Officer, Brian Boyd, via the Glasgow Office.

“Comparative Health Policy” - book review

“Comparative Health Policy” by Robert Blank and Viola Burau compares the health systems of eleven western economies. It should be made required reading for those politicians, journalists and management experts who simplistically insist on the benefits of US-style managed care, German-style health insurance, Netherlands hospital governance or Swedish public private partnership arrangements etc. Blank and Burau examine the political, historical and cultural contexts of national health care systems including the mechanisms for priority setting and resource allocation and the role played by the medical profession. In other words, it's not that simple.

Devolution impacts on UK health care

According to Dr Scott Greer, author of “Four Way Bet: how devolution has led to four different models for the NHS” the health systems of the UK are diverging radically because of devolution. The English system is predicated on patient choice, diversity and commissioning. Scotland, in contrast, is showing more faith in health care professionals and less on markets and management. The Welsh health strategy focuses on population health and local delivery (including the involvement of local authorities). Northern Ireland's limited devolution and complex politics have resulted in a bizarre combination of policy standstill and local divergence. Each country is on a clear but entirely different trajectory. What will be most interesting will be if one or other system proves more successful than the others. Will the other countries adopt that system or will political prejudice and dogma prevail?

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1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of previous meeting and arising.
3. Correspondence.
4. Reports.
5. Motions.
6. A.O.C.B.

The next meeting of the Branch will be held on Wednesday 26th April at 6.30 p.m. All meetings are held in the Scottish Trade Union Congress, 333 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6NG.
(Tea, coffee & biscuits 6.15 p.m.)

