

Report of Secretary for Scotland to Guild Council Meeting 14/9/10

Group Meetings

There have been no meetings since my last report to Council.

In the Press

31/08/10 - New snapshot figures show that 99.8 per cent of patients in Scotland were waiting less than nine weeks for inpatient and day case treatment. The numbers for June 30, 2010 which were published today by ISD Scotland represent the best ever performance by *NHS Scotland* and show that the health service continues to exceed the national waiting times standard of 12 weeks for inpatient and day case treatment. In addition to this no patient waited more than six weeks for the eight key diagnostic tests and in a further example of improving performance 99.8 per cent of patients received one of the eight key diagnostic tests within four weeks. The outpatient target also continues to be met with 99.9 per cent of all patients waiting less than 12 weeks to be seen. Additionally 97.5 per cent of those attending Accident and Emergency were seen within the four hour target time.

6/8/10 - Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon has announced a new health advice centre (<http://www.nhsinform.co.uk>) for Scotland in Glasgow, ahead of the annual review of NHS 24. The new scheme, *NHS Inform*, is a telephone helpline and website which provides non-urgent health information to the public. A face-to-face service is also being developed which will be delivered by local authorities and voluntary organisations. The government has stated that the scheme will cost £500,000 and will cut duplication of work in the NHS.

2/8/10 - The first phase of the new £300m *Forth Valley Royal Hospital* has opened to patients. The £300 million hospital will first treat people suffering from illnesses such as diabetes, respiratory disease and cardiology issues. It is part of a three-phase plan to transfer services from *Falkirk* and *Stirling infirmaries* to Larbert. The hospital is the first in the UK to employ a fleet of "robot" workers that will carry clinical waste, deliver food, clean the operating theatres and dispense drugs.

6/8/10 - *NHS Lothian* has launched its Living and Dying Well in Lothian strategy, which aims to improve the quality of end of life care offered to everyone with a life-limiting illness. It will also give patients more choice about their end of life care. The five-year plan was approved by NHS Lothian's board members this week.

6/8/10 - A study into dementia has stated that health initiatives which focussed on improving mental and physical wellbeing by eliminating diabetes and depression, would have the most significant impact on reducing levels of dementia in the future. The researchers write that "diabetes, and perhaps also depression, should be the principal targets of future population based health prevention".

6/8/10 - The General Register Office for Scotland has published its Annual Review of Demographic Trends, including statistics for 2009 relating to births, deaths, life expectancy and

migration in Scotland. It suggests that Scotland's population continued to rise in the year ending 30 June 2009 to a total of 5,194,000 - an increase of around 25,000 over the previous year. Registrar General for Scotland Duncan Macniven said the review had also shown that while the number of deaths continued to fall and life expectancy increased, the life expectancy of men and women in Scotland was still lower than in the rest of the UK.

13/8/10 - The Scottish Patients Association has criticised *NHS Scotland* for its decision not to allow stomach cancer patients access to a new drug, calling it "morally wrong", according to the Scotsman. The Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) could not recommend the drug Herceptin as its cost outweighed its effectiveness. The drug costs around £10,000 for a six month course, with the treatment being viable for around 50 patients in Scotland per year. Research suggests that when Herceptin is used with chemotherapy, it increases patient survival from 11.8 months to 16 months.

19/8/10 - The Scottish Government has announced its plans to implement the **NHS Quality Strategy** in primary care facilities such as GPs, care homes, dentists, pharmacies and health centres. The plan *Delivering Quality in Primary Care*, sets out a number of actions designed to improve the quality of patient care, including:

- Improving access for patients
- Implementing the Scottish Patient Safety Programme in Primary Care
- Ensuring more effective partnerships between different primary care professionals
- Improving communication between primary and secondary care

The plan has been endorsed by several health bodies including the British Medical Association, British Dental Association, Community Pharmacy Scotland, the Royal College of GPs, Optometry Scotland and the Royal College of Nursing

20/8/10 - The Scottish Government has announced its three year plan for tackling diabetes. The Scottish Diabetes Action Plan 2010 will offer the diabetes community the chance to work together to share best practice, support and deliver high quality care.

2/9/10 - The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, Nicola Sturgeon has named the Scottish Government's preferred minimum price for alcohol at 45p. The Government believes that this price will lead to: 50 fewer deaths from alcohol-related harm; 1,200 fewer hospital admissions; a £5.5 million reduction in health care costs and 22,900 fewer days absence from work in its first year of implementation.

9/9/10 - In a paper to the Finance Committee, Professor David Bell has suggested hospital patients be charged a "hotel rate" to boost the NHS budget. He referenced a similar scheme in Sweden, saying the provision of services there "is more competitive than in Scotland" and that "user charges provide around 3% of the health budget." He claims the idea may be worth up to £300m to the NHS. A spokesperson for Finance Secretary John Swinney said: "*We won't know just how bad the Westminster cuts to Scotland's budget are until next month when George Osborne announces the spending review, but we have already said any Barnett health consequential will be applied to the NHS in Scotland. We are completely opposed to the idea of charges for NHS services.*"

AfC

There has been no update on the Review results in *Greater Glasgow & Clyde* for those staff for whom the process is not yet complete. A number of reviews have been sent to STAC to see if they can be resolved. There is a widespread suspicion that the current economic situation is having an effect on the outcomes of recent reviews.

NHS Senior Reps Meeting 27.8.10

The main topics of discussion were all related to the current financial situation and its effects on NHS Scotland.

Other

I have dealt with a number of member queries and one new membership application.

Colin Rodden
13.9.10