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On the agenda

1. Increase in GPs offering extended opening hours

New statistics released this week show an increase in the number of PCTs and practices offering extended opening hours. Results show an increase from 37.8 percent in July to 44.9 percent in August.

This demonstrates good progress towards December’s target of 50 percent of practices in all PCTs offering extended opening hours.

Find out more

2. A regime for unsustainable NHS providers

‘Developing the NHS performance regime’, published 4 June 2008, announced the Government’s intention to “establish a failure regime for state-owned providers that reflects the Government’s obligations to ensure service continuity and protect public assets.” A consultation sets out proposals on such a regime and seeks views by 3 December.

View more information and take part in the consultation regime.

3. Improvements in community mental health services

A Healthcare Commission survey of people using community mental health services shows continued improvements in care.

A larger percentage of service users say that they have confidence in mental health professionals, receive copies of their care plan and have a number to contact out-of-hours when in a crisis situation.

The survey does however show more needs to be done to improve access and public involvement in decision-making.

View full survey results
Policy news

1. Mental Capacity Act - Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

(Gateway reference number: 10490)

The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards DOLS supplement to the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice was issued by the Lord Chancellor in August 2008. A Code of Practice has been developed and transitional arrangements will be placed before Parliament to ease the handling of the higher number of assessments that may be requested when the Safeguards are implemented in April 2009.

Link:
www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare/
Deliveringadultsocialcare/MentalCapacity/
MentalCapacityActDeprivationofLibertySafeguards/DH_087830

Action:
- Directors of adult social care services and NHS chief executives will need to ensure that staff affected are familiar with the (DOLS) Code of Practice and the transitional arrangements.
The powers of the Care Quality Commission will be introduced in Parliament this year.

The Care Quality Commission will have the power to carry out annual infection control inspections, increase visits to hospitals with high rates of HCAIs, as well as issue early warning notices to trusts, and if necessary, carry out counter fraud investigations.

A new powerful regulator will play a key role in ensuring the NHS can demonstrate greater protection for patients and a level playing field for its providers.

As signalled in the Operating Framework, Nick Chapman, National Director of 18 Weeks has written to NHS chief executives with more detailed guidance on the use of PCT level surveys to measure local patient experience of 18 week pathways.

2. Local 18 weeks patient experience surveys (Gateway reference number: 10472)
As signalled in the Operating Framework, Nick Chapman, National Director of 18 Weeks has written to NHS chief executives with more detailed guidance on the use of PCT level surveys to measure local patient experience of 18 week pathways.

**Link:**
www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH_087803

**Action:**
• PCTs that have not conducted a local survey in accordance with the mentioned requirements will be expected to have done so by the end of December 2008.

3. Information prescriptions implementation (Gateway reference number: 10316)
Information prescriptions, delivered by health and social care professionals, ensure that people with long-term health or care needs receive information to help manage their condition. Organisations are now considering implementation. Supporting this, is an independent final report which evaluates the piloting, and a resource pack. Information prescriptions are now available through NHS Choices.

**Links:**

**Action:**
• NHS chief executives and directors of social care will wish to consider implementation of information prescriptions.
Published every Thursday, the week provides need-to-know news, consultations and events for chief executives and their teams. It provides links to more information and resources, highlighting areas for action.

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> Policy news
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> Need help?

4. Statement of Financial Entitlements (Amendment) (No 3) Directions 2008 (Gateway reference number: 10445)
This amendment to the Statement of Financial Entitlements (SFE) implements the recommendations in the Doctors and Dentists Review Body recommendations as they apply to GMS providers. The amendment is effective from 1 October 2008.

**Links:**
www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/Publications Legislation/DH_087635

**Action:**
- PCT chief executives to note the amendment and ensure payments are adjusted to ensure they continue to be made in line with the SFE. Further details via the above link.

5. Pandemic influenza: guidance for dental practices (Gateway reference number: 10244)
This good practice guidance provides a brief overview of pandemic flu, how it is transmitted and the recommendations for containing its transmission with reference to a dental setting.

**Links:**

**Action:**
- In the event of a pandemic it will help PCT chief executives with local planning, see link for further details.
6. Pandemic influenza: contract arrangements for primary care dentistry
   (Gateway reference number: 10492)
This guidance supplements and should be read with other guidance on Pandemic Flu available on the DH website.

Links:

Action:
• This good practice guidance will help PCT chief executives with local planning and provides specific advice to the NHS on the delivery and contract arrangements for primary care dentistry in the event of a pandemic.

7. Better Care Better Value Indicators
   (Gateway reference number: 10525)
The Quarter 4 2007/08 Better Care Better Value Indicators are now available. In addition to the existing indicators we are also publishing the 2007/08 data for three new clinical indicators: Reducing Did Not Attend appointments; Managing New to Follow Up appointments; Emergency Re-admission rates at 14 days. (up to Quarter 3 2007/08).

Links:
www.nhsindicatorexplorer.productivity.nhs.uk/render/controller/dhnpi/

Action:
• NHS chief executives can view more detailed information behind the published values and compare their performance. Organisations can register free for access at the above link.
The powers of the Care Quality Commission will be to be introduced in Parliament this year. The Commission will have the power to carry out annual infection control inspections, increase the regulation of health and adult social care in England, and tackle healthcare associated infections (HCAIs). An independent report from the Audit Commission acknowledges that there is still a gap between the top performers and those failing to balance the books. However, the report also acknowledged that there is 31 percent of trusts failed to meet minimum requirements, compared with 39 percent in 2005/06. Year 2006/07, found that: • 27 percent of trusts performed well or strongly in their use of resources, compared with 12 percent in 2005/06 • a decline in mortality rates from cancers and circulatory diseases • a decrease in number of smokers and smoking-related hospital admissions. Positive results from data published in the Health Profile of England 2007 include increased life expectancy and a reduced rate of deaths from cancer. The profile allows for local health profile (LHP). Results include: • a decline in mortality rates from cancers and circulatory diseases • a decrease in number of smokers and smoking-related hospital admissions.
Tough new regulator

The new Care Quality Commission will have the power to carry out annual infection control inspections, increase visits to hospitals with high rates of HCAIs, as well as issue early warning notices to trusts, and if necessary, close down wards. The move is part of the Department of Health's response to the consultation, The future regulation of health and adult social care in England.

A new powerful regulator will play a key role in tackling healthcare associated infections (HCAIs).

Letters and circulars/Dear colleague letters/DH_087895

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/

Links:

- Offender Health: www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH_087895
- Dentistry: www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH_087895
- Jobseeker's Allowance: www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH_087895

Action:

- NHS chief executives are invited to the event. Further details are available in the attached letter. The closing date for registrations is 26 September 2008.
10. Clean Hands Save Lives
(Gateway reference number: 10468)
This patient safety alert highlights best practice in hygiene at the point of care including the role of hand hygiene to prevent and control infection, the placement of alcohol handrub products, and the management of risks amongst others.

Action:
- NHS chief executives should ensure organisations have up-to-date policies and procedures promoting timely and effective hand decontamination. Future versions of the Health Act 2006 Code of Practice for Prevention and Control of Health Care Associated Infections will reference the alert.

Links:

11. Technical Solutions for ventilator-associated pneumonia
(Gateway reference number: 10522)
On 27 August joint guidance was issued by the National Patient Safety Agency and NICE on reducing the risk of pneumonia in patients aged 16 years and older on a ventilator.

Action:
- NHS chief executives will wish to note the guidance and implications for their organisation.

Links:
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/index.jsp?action=byID&o=12053
The Powers of the Care Quality Commission will be included in the new Health and Social Care Bill due to tackle healthcare associated infections (HCAIs). The Care Quality Commission will have the power to carry out annual infection control inspections, increase or an alteration in your own contact details, reply to full contact details and date of change.

If you have trouble opening the attachment or accessing links please email mb-web-feedback@dh.gsi.gov.uk

If you would like to make general comments on the week please contact Phil Cohen by email at theweek@dh.gsi.gov.uk or by faxing 020 7972 5851 or by writing to Room 449, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, Department of Health, London SW1A 2NS.