

Weekly Update

NUMBER 122 | 18 AUGUST 2008

Events Diary

9, 10 & 11 September

IHM Scotland

Practice Management: Cutting Free from the Legacy of the 20th Century

9.30-4pm, Nairn, Edinburgh & Glasgow
1 day workshop, with Kathie Applebee. For all practice managers. See attached flyer

11 & 25 September

IHM Scotland

Project Management

9.30am to 4.00pm, Dunblane Hydro Hotel
Two day workshop; places are limited. See flyer for details and booking.

24 September

IHM Scotland

The Manager's Guide to Clinical Governance

9.30am-4pm, Airth Castle Hotel
One day workshop linking directly to the 'Managing Service Quality' Milestone. Content suitable for all managers. See flyer for full details.

20 & 21 October

IHM Scotland

'Getting the balance right': annual conference

12.30pm Monday 20th – 12.30pm Tuesday 21st, Airth Castle Hotel
Book online now at www.hfevents.co.uk/ihm2008. See attached flyer for programme details.

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This week in Parliament

The Scottish Parliament is now in recess until Monday 1 September.

Interim NHS staff dress code issued to aid infection control

Draft guidance on how NHS Scotland staff should dress has been published online. The Scottish Chief Medical and Nursing Officers, on the instructions of Health Secretary, Nicola Sturgeon, issued a circular outlining an interim dress code for NHS Scotland staff, following the recent revelations of a fatal outbreak of C. Difficile at the Vale of Leven Hospital.

A working group comprising Scottish Government, NHS board and trade union representatives is currently examining issues relating to uniforms and dress code for NHS Scotland and has recently concluded a consultation, so the new guidance is not final or definitive. However, in the light of the situation at Vale of Leven, the Cabinet Secretary asked for an interim set of guiding principles to be issued to help all staff – both those who wear uniforms and those who do not – to ensure that their dress complies with infection control standards.

The main points of the code include:

- Wearing short sleeves and avoiding wearing ties or white coats when providing patient care
- Where facilities are available, changing in and out of uniform at work and, unless it is integral to the job, avoiding public activities such as shopping while wearing uniform
- Avoiding excessive jewellery, particularly on the hands and wrists – only a plain wedding band or other plain band should be worn on the hands
- If on-site laundry facilities are not available, staff may be allowed to launder uniforms at home once boards have undertaken risk assessments, however boards are encouraged to provide laundry facilities wherever possible.

The interim code is available to download at www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/08/interimdresscode. The Scottish Government has also published a list of general (www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/08/08115920/2) and specific to NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde (www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/08/08120104/0) actions to be taken in response to the C. Diff outbreak.

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Cancer services 'should focus on whole patient'

The Cancer Care Research Centre at Stirling University has published a new report which calls for a move away from a "disease-focused" approach in cancer care in Scotland to one which focuses on the "whole experience" of patients and carers.

Professor Nora Kearney, one of the report's authors, said that with 27,000 new cases of cancer diagnosed in Scotland each year and with the country lagging behind its European counterparts in cancer survival rates, it was plain that more had to be done. "We are still failing people with cancer in Scotland," said Professor Kearney, "A new model for cancer care is required that addresses the whole experience of the patient and not just management of their disease... This means that as well as making sure people in Scotland can have the best medical management for their cancer we must also provide support for the social and psychological issues that people with cancer have identified as being important to them." The series of reports are the result of three years of Scottish Government-funded research assessing the experiences of cancer patients and their carers. The researchers found that, while much of the care provided to cancer patients in Scotland is good and that work reflecting their recommendations can be found in many parts of NHS Scotland, nonetheless a focus on management of the disease can make patients feel that they have experienced a lack of a "culture of caring", which leaves them feeling isolated and disrespected.

The report proposes a new model for cancer care, in which focuses on outcomes and processes, based on partnership with the patient, interact, impact on and evolve with each other at all stages of treatment and care. The report recommends that services are developed based on a "synergy between professional expertise and patient and public experiences."

The reports can be downloaded at www.cancercare.stir.ac.uk/publications/index.htm.

Unscheduled care 'should continue' at Vale of Leven

An independent review of the future of services at the Vale of Leven Hospital has concluded that a "significant proportion" of unscheduled care can continue to be provided safely at the hospital. Although the team concluded that anaesthetic cover at the hospital is unsustainable, but that unscheduled admissions could still be received at the hospital when a doctor has previously assessed the patient as suitable to receive treatment there. Unscheduled admissions without a prior assessment should be diverted to another suitable hospital, such as the Royal Alexandria, their report says.

The review team, which was chaired by Professor Chris Dodds of the Royal College of Anaesthetists in England, was commissioned by Health Secretary, Nicola Sturgeon, following criticism last year by an Independent Review Panel of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's plans to close the unscheduled care unit at the Vale of Leven. Uncertainty over the future of services at the hospital was identified as a factor behind the recent fatal outbreak of C. Difficile there by another independent report.

Ms Sturgeon stressed that no final decision had been taken but said that the report would provide "greater clarity" to NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde in its deliberations over the future of the hospital. NHS GGC chief executive, Tom Divers, said that the board is committed to examining the proposals.

The report has received a mixed response from local politicians who have been campaigning to maintain emergency services at the Vale of Leven. Labour's Jackie Baillie MSP said it was "hugely disappointing" and that it would "to all intents and purposes" mean the closure of emergency facilities, however the Conservative's Jackson Carlaw welcomed the recommendations as "another step in the right direction" on the back of news that a birthing unit at the hospital is to be maintained.

The review team's report can be read at www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/08/anaesthetics-vol-review.

The IHM is the leading UK professional organisation for managers in health and health-care. Its purpose is to enhance and promote high standards of professional management in order to improve health and healthcare for the benefit of the public.