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Tel: (01622) 694125,
Freecall: 7000 4125
E-mail: TheInformationPoint@kent.gov.uk
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Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Bulletin No. 24 / 11 June 2010

If you would like to receive further information, please telephone or email the appropriate contact officer responsible. Alternatively, contact Tristan Godfrey on 01622 694196 or email tristan.godfrey@kent.gov.uk.

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Health in Kent

Campaign to warn about the consequences of drink driving

Kent Police, Medway Council and Kent Highway Services have launched 'Don't Blow It', a campaign, to warn people you about the effects and consequences of drink driving.

With the World Cup just around the corner, when people will be celebrating their team's success or commiserating when they lose, the campaign emphasises that it's important to remember that only one alcoholic drink is enough to cause an accident.

See:

[Don't Blow It](#)

Department of Health

DOH Bulletin *The Week*

The Department of Health (DOH) publish each a week a bulletin with news, consultations and events for chief executives in the NHS and local authorities and their teams. The publication *The Week* offers links to more information and resources, highlighting areas for action.

See:

[The Week: issue 149, 4 - 10 June 2010](#)

Report from the Adam Smith Institute argues that in reducing public spending, the NHS should share proposed spending cuts

The Adam Smith Institute has published a report '[The Party is Over](#)' which argues that reducing public spending is the most pressing challenge facing the new Government, but also recommends that the NHS should share the burden of any spending cuts.

Sponsorship to support the NHS Leadership Awards Scheme

The Department of Health (DOH) are inviting sponsorship to support the NHS Leadership Awards Scheme during 2010 / 2011 and build on the success of the inaugural 2009 scheme.

The awards, which are uniquely peer reviewed, aim to recognise outstanding leaders across the service, at every level, spread good leadership practice and foster the leaders of the future.

The scheme recognises outstanding leaders through the following nine categories:

- NHS Board of the Year.
- NHS Community Leader of the Year.
- NHS Innovator of the Year.
- NHS Award for Inspiration.
- NHS Leader of the Year.
- NHS Mentor of the Year.
- NHS Newcomer of the Year.
- NHS Partnership Award of the Year.
- NHS Quality Champion of the Year

See:

[Sponsorship Invited For NHS Leadership Awards scheme – expressions of interest invited](#)

Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme – updated guidance document on regulations governing the healthcare and travel costs scheme.

The Department of Health (DOH) has published [‘Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme: instructions and guidance for the NHS’](#) which provides information for NHS organisations on the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS) which replaced the current Hospital Travel Costs Scheme in April 2008.

The document is split into two parts:-

- The legal requirements in relation to the administration of the HTCS scheme.
- Good practice guidance on how the scheme may be delivered, including details on eligibility criteria and best practice resources.

Proposals for savings in the NHS

At the BMA Local Medical Committees conference GP leader Dr. Laurence Buckman has set out schemes that should be ‘consigned to the dustbin’ to help cut NHS costs.

In his [speech](#) to the 2010 annual conference of local medical committees in London, Dr Buckman set out a ‘starter list’ of things which he considered the Department of Health could scrap, including the bureaucracy tied to the NHS market, management consultants, patient surveys and management tiers. Dr. Buckman also called for a review to properly assess the cost-effectiveness of parts of NHS Direct.

See:

[GPs leader issues NHS cuts ‘starter list’.](#)

Guidance on NHS charges and available help for those who have difficulty paying health costs.

The Department of Health (DOH) has outlined NHS charges for prescriptions and dentistry together with details of help for those who have difficulty paying health costs. The information includes entitlement to free NHS funded sight tests and optical vouchers, and also provides information on NHS patients seeking treatment abroad and charges for treatment for overseas visitors.

See:

[Entitlements and charges](#)

DOH Diagnostic statistics

The Department of Health (DOH) has published Monthly and quarterly/biannual diagnostics statistics.

See:

[Diagnostics](#)

GP Patient Survey

The Department of Health has published [‘The GP Patient Survey: briefing for strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and GP practices on the GPPS 2009-10’](#) which confirms details of the GP Patient Survey arrangements for 2009/10, including how the data is used to assess payments to GP practices under the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) and how that will need to be managed by PCTs and GP practices to ensure achievement payments are made in time.

Patient- centred care

The Department of Health (DOH) has published a speech by the Rt Hon Andrew Lansley CBE MP, Secretary of State for Health, 8 June 2010: [‘My ambition for patient-centred care’](#)

Report on savings in the NHS

The *Health Service Journal* report on an enterprise-wide display system used by two NHS trusts in the Midlands and London. 'Horizon Enterprise Visibility' converges and assimilates data from across the hospital and allows staff to access real time data showing patient, bed and ward information.

Health Service Journal argue that improving productivity, performance and improving patient care is central to the future of the NHS. As NHS trusts face increasingly austere cost efficiency measures over the coming years, anything that helps them reduce long term cost, increase the efficiency and productivity of clinical staff and improve the quality of patient care can only be welcomed.

See:

[Improving NHS productivity with the Horizon Enterprise Visibility tool](#)

Government

Proposed reform of child benefits

Frank Field, the Government's poverty advisor, is considering a radical reform of child benefits, including ending payments to more than seven million families when their children reach the age of 13.

The Minister is also looking at taxing child benefit and allowing parents to receive payments of up to £25,000 in the first three years after a child's birth. In an interview with *The Times*, the Minister argued that the benefit, which costs the taxpayer £11 billion a year, should be linked more closely to the child's age.

See:

[Millions may lose out in reform of child benefits](#)

Suggestions for Private Members' Bills

Following the results of the private Members' bill ballot, members of ePolitix.com members put forward their ideas for a Bill, including 'Protection of Carers' Services Funding Bill' and 'Emergency Life Support Skills Bill'.

See:

[What would you like to see as a private members' bill?](#)

Arguments that the Children's Plan will not work

The Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) has published a report [‘Cutting the Children's Plan’](#) which argues that the Children's Plan, published by the DCSF in December 2007, was argued to be 'a vision for change to make England the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up.'

But CPS argue that the 2010-11 budget for the various elements in the Children's Plan is estimated at £5 billion a year, and it is doubtful whether the programmes in the Children's Plan can ever achieve the high ambitions set out for them, as most are flawed both in concept and in practice.

See:

[Cutting the Children's Plan: a £5 billion experiment gone astray](#)

Parliament

Parliamentary statement by Andrew Lansley, Minister for Health

The Secretary of State for Health, Andrew Lansley, made an oral Ministerial Statement to Parliament on 9 June about Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust.

See:

[Health Secretary Andrew Lansley's Oral Statement on 9 June 2010](#)

House of Lords debate on genomic medicine

The House of Lords debated the Science and Technology Committee report 'Genomic Medicine' on Wednesday 9 June, in the House of Lords. The debate, which was chaired by Lord Patel, focused on the development and integration of genetic and genomic services into the NHS, problems with the current provision of services, the bringing together of molecular pathology and genetics laboratories and the challenges of storing and interpreting the vast sources of data that will accompany such tests.

See:

[Lords debate genomic medicine](#)

Balloted debate on new legislation for workplace pension schemes

The subject of the first balloted debate in the House of Lords for the new Parliamentary session, was the new legislation that makes it compulsory for employers to enrol workers into a qualifying workplace pension scheme.

See:

[Balloted debate on changes to pensions laws](#)

Other Health Information

IDeA healthy bulletin

The think tank IDeA has produced the 'Knowledge Healthy Communities bulletin, June 2010'. The bulletin is designed to help people working in the local authority health arena stay informed.

See:

[IDeA Knowledge Healthy Communities bulletin](#)

National Men's Week 14 – 20 June 2010-06-11

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are celebrating National Men's Week 14 – 20 June 2010.

See:

[National Men's Health Week](#)

Research team finds DNA links to incidence and spread of bowel cancer

A research team at the University of Utah has identified a region of DNA that appears to be involved in the development of pre-cancerous bowel growths (polyps) and that may contain a gene involved in the progression of bowel cancer.

The team made the discovery while analysing the DNA of 81 people from five generations of a single family with an unusually high incidence of bowel cancer, and identified a stretch of DNA

on chromosome 13 (13q) that appears to be significantly associated with the incidence of polyps and the progression and spread of bowel cancer.

See:

[US scientists home in on new bowel cancer gene](#)

Single dose of radiotherapy during breast cancer surgery is as effective as a prolonged course of treatment.

A study published in *The Lancet* indicates that a single dose of radiation during breast cancer surgery is just as effective as a prolonged course of radiotherapy.

The technique, a 'one-stop procedure' which has been clinically tested, involves a single shot of radiotherapy to the tumour site during surgery, and could 'have a huge impact' for patients.

See:

[One-shot radiotherapy 'success against breast cancer'](#)

[Targeted intraoperative radiotherapy versus whole breast radiotherapy for breast cancer \(TARGIT-A trial\): an international, prospective, randomised, non-inferiority phase 3 trial: summary](#)

Northumberland award in the 'Strengthening Families' programme

The 'Strengthening Families' programme is an evidence-based prevention program which aims to break the poverty cycle, and has been implemented in a wide range of settings such as schools, drug treatment centres, housing projects, homeless shelters, churches and drug courts.

Escape Family Support Ltd, commissioned by the Safer Northumberland Partnership, saw the potential for applying the 'Strengthening Families' programme to offenders in prison, linking with their families in order to facilitate a smoother return to family and society, strengthen the family unit, and reduce the risk of re-offending.

See:

[About the 'Strengthening Families' programme](#)

Patient choice: the policy of offering patients a choice in where they received medical treatment

The King's Fund has published a report: ['Patient choice: how patients choose and providers respond'](#) which looks at the policy of offering patients a choice in where they receive hospital treatment. The initiative was intended to create competition between providers, encouraging efficiency and responsiveness to patients' preferences and ultimately to drive up the quality of care. So has the policy met those aims?

The report considers how free choice of provider is operating in practice and what impact patient choice is having on hospital providers. More specifically, the report aims to answer the following questions:

- How do patients experience choice?
- What factors are important to patients when choosing between providers in practice?
- How do GPs support choice?
- How are providers responding to choice?

See also:

[Summary](#)

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