



NEWS RELEASE

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HEALTH WATCHDOG REACTS TO PLANS ON NORTH WALES VASCULAR SERVICES

The independent health services watchdog for North Wales – the North Wales Community Health Council (NWCHC) has commented on plans relating to some of the regions vascular services.

A statement issued this week by the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB), advised of recent serious patient safety incidents and staffing problems within its vascular service. BCUHB has also stated that it has made plans to transfer a small number of emergency vascular patients from North Wales to the Liverpool Vascular Centre and of its intention to delay treatment and appointments for a number of other patients.

Mr Geoff Ryall-Harvey, Chief Officer for NWCHC said ‘We are saddened to learn of the serious events that have had a significant impact on patients and our thoughts are with those patients and their families at this most difficult of times. We are disappointed to learn that some patients will be experiencing further delays where the treatment and management of their vascular problems are concerned. NWCHC however welcomes the support offered by the Health Board to those patients in dealing with the uncertainty whilst plans are put in place and we will continue to provide the offer of an independent organisation in assisting patients with their experiences.’

‘Only last month, NWCHC urged the BCUHB and Welsh Government to explore sending the most complex and highest risk vascular patients directly to Liverpool, Chester or another appropriate service. We said that we believed that this would improve patient confidence until the necessary improvements have been made and shown to be effective. We welcome the assurances given by the Health Board and are

pleased that it has set out publically some of its plans and timelines for the safeguarding of patients.’

Mr Ryall-Harvey went on to say ‘We wrote to the Health Minister in February of this year asking that the Welsh Government would provide all necessary assistance to take action to explore transferring a number of emergency vascular patients to Liverpool or an appropriate service accessible to North Wales patients. We told the Minister that we believe it will provide the support and the impetus needed to address the long-standing problems affecting the service.’

‘NWCHC now wishes to see the further detail regarding the Health Board’s plans, in particular concerning the impact upon patients and their families. We have already asked the Health Board to let us know what support patients and families will receive, for example when it comes to such things as travelling to Liverpool, over-night accommodation, rehabilitation and the subsequent costs incurred.’

The Minister for Health and Social Services has been invited to meet with NWCHC over the coming weeks to discuss the long term problems of BCUHB in relation to North Wales vascular and mental health services.

Note for editors

1 North Wales Community Health Council (CHC) is an independent statutory organisation which represents the interests of patients and the public in the National Health Service in North Wales. It came into being on 1 April 2010 as part of the reorganization of health services in Wales and covers the counties of Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Wrexham and Ynys Môn. The six counties have a combined population of around 675,500.

2 The Community Health Council has six local committees, one covering each of the six counties. Each local committee comprises members drawn from three sources: councillors nominated by the relevant local authority, people nominated by the local voluntary sector organizations and local people appointed by Welsh Assembly Government.

More information

For more information or an interview with Geoff Ryall- Harvey please contact: North Wales CHC, tel: 01248 679284 or Email: carol.williams63@wales.nhs.uk

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