

News

At-a-glance

- new consultation launched
- best practice for patient care environment
- nutrition and hydration initiatives for nurses.

Links and info

- Access Essence of Care – consultation on patient care environment

Nurses to help develop action plan to improve care environment

Patients' and clinicians' opinions about how the immediate environment affects patients and their care are being sought to inform the eleventh Essence of Care benchmark consultation.

Essence of Care was launched in February 2001 and so far 10 benchmarks have been published. The aim is to provide a tool to help nurses and other healthcare professionals take a more patient-focused and consistent approach to all areas of practice.

Staff are encouraged to work with patients to identify the most important elements for the latest benchmark, particularly the following issues:

- patient and visitor access
- tidiness and maintenance
- hygiene and cleanliness
- infection control precautions
- patient comfort and security



- staff competence
- availability and maintenance of supplies and equipment.

Each element is accompanied by a list of examples of best practice intended to help discussions and these will allow groups of patients and professionals to rate their own care environment experiences.

Best practice for NHS staff includes:

- welcome patients and provide directions
- work tidily and participate in the monitoring of tidiness
- clean hands between tasks and patient care
- wear personal protective equipment (PPE)
- recognise the need for quiet and rest periods.

The 10 existing benchmarks in the Essence of Care programme are: communication; continence; hygiene; nutrition and hydration; pressure ulcers; privacy and dignity; record keeping; safety; self-care; and promoting health.

The consultation for the environment benchmark closes on 14 October.

Links and info

- Access the website

Contribute to NHS review

Nurses' views are needed for *Our NHS, our future*, a comprehensive review to identify the way forward for the NHS in the next decade and beyond.

Direct and consistent contact with patients gives nurses a central role in

the debate and an online questionnaire is available for download.

Access the questionnaire and a presentation on the review on its new website.

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More information—

You can access the bulletin online at www.dh.gov.uk/cnobulletin

The electronic version lets you click on web links for direct access to more detail about each of the articles.

Have your say —

This bulletin is tailor-made for nurses and midwives across the NHS. It aims to cover the main news and developments every month. Please send your views on the content and design to Susan Frade at CNO-Bulletin@dh.gsi.gov.uk

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Voicepiece



Christine Beasley, Chief Nursing Officer, praises nursing efforts during the recent floods and outlines more about the NHS review.

There is one thing that nurses and midwives do particularly well in what are often the most challenging of circumstances, that is to deliver the best of care.

I was struck by this most recently during a visit to Tewkesbury where I met nurses caring for people whose homes were damaged and whose lives were affected badly by the recent floods. Many of these nurses lived in the local community and their homes were also flooded, or they were living without water and electricity. Yet despite this, they responded magnificently to ensure that patients felt safe, cared for, respected and involved, especially during this time when they were facing loss, fear and pain. Their knowledge of

the local community and local health needs enabled these nurses to carry on providing high quality care despite very challenging circumstances. Even though the initial crisis is over, nurses continue to support patients and families who still have to live with the effects of these devastating floods.

Without doubt, another area of expertise is managing to deliver the constants of care during what must sometimes seem like endless change in the NHS. We must make sure that we can continue to meet patients' needs in the face of wider changes in society and healthcare that are on the horizon. The NHS review, *Our NHS, our future*, led by Lord Ara Darzi aims to find out how best to: support improvements in care at a local level, ensure care is based on the best possible clinical evidence, take

Another area of expertise is managing to deliver the constants of care during what must sometimes seem like endless change in the NHS.

on board patients' and clinicians' views and make them central to NHS plans. Nurses and midwives must therefore make sure they contribute fully to the debate.

To find out more about the review and contribute your views visit the website www.nhs.uk/ourNHS

Your feedback will be fed into the review as it progresses.

Next wave of immunisation research

Nurses should be aware that the British Market Research Bureau (BMRB) will be conducting research on attitudes to, and awareness of, immunisation among parents from 1 October to 4 November.

The agency is carrying out this research on behalf of NHS Immunisation Information, which it has done since 1991. Occasionally this research has led to enquiries from parents.

Fully trained BMRB interviewers, who will all have ID badges, will conduct face-to-face interviews in the home of parents of children aged under three. The research fully complies with the appropriate Market Research Society Code of Conduct guidelines and all

respondents will be assured of the confidentiality of the research.

The study is a key component of the immunisation programme in this country so nurses

need to be aware of the work.

Any queries or concerns should be directed to Steve Thorogood on 020 7972 4397 or Tara Mackey at BMRB on 020 8433 4413.



Links and info

- Access Essence of Care – consultation on patient care environment
- Support RCN's Nutrition Now campaign
- View NPSA resources on nutrition and hydration
- Further details on the BAPEN survey
- Download the Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey from the FSA

Nutrition and hydration

A fresh campaign is urging nurses to use a range of tools including the national guidance set out in the nutrition and hydration benchmark in the Essence of Care programme.

Nutrition Now, one of a number of recent initiatives, is a Royal College of Nursing (RCN) campaign. It aims to improve nutrition for patients by giving nurses the tools and support needed to prioritise nutrition.

The campaign aims for:

- wards and care homes to

ensure protected meal times, as set out by the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) in 2004

- inpatients and those in care homes to have a nutritional assessment within 48 hours of admission
- a change in local attitudes and behaviour towards food

and nutrition.

RCN *Principles for Nutrition and Hydration*, distributed last April, supports the campaign. Further activities will run throughout 2007/08, such as workshops, focus sites and awareness months.

Nutrition and hydration: wider work

Nutrition Screening Week
Clinical nutrition charity, BAPEN, is leading Nutrition Screening Week (25–27 September) along with the British Dietetic Association (BDA) and the RCN. As part of the event, the first recorded data is to be collected about the rate of patient malnutrition on admission to hospitals and care homes.

Dehydration – a patient safety issue
The NPSA is planning a programme of work to raise awareness of dehydration as a patient safety issue. This will include the launch of a Hydration Best Practice Toolkit for hospitals in early autumn. For further information please contact Nutrition Lead Caroline Lecko at caroline.lecko@npsa.nhs.uk or

via telephone on 020 7927 9568.

Impact of low income on nutrition

Nutrition levels in general are given further analysis through the recent Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey (LIDNS) by the Foods Standards Agency. A total of 2,477 households were surveyed.

At-a-glance

- new consultation seeks to modernise stroke services in England
- as carers for stroke sufferers, nursing input will be pivotal to the strategy's development
- consultation closes 12 October.

Links and info

- Access the consultation

Nurses' key role in developing new national stroke strategy

Nurses' views are vital to a consultation about a new national strategy for stroke services.

The document, *A new ambition for stroke – a consultation on a national strategy*, recognises many needs: matching the use of modern treatments, such as clot-busting drugs, to an increase in the range of healthcare staff who are able to provide the necessary acute care, including specialist nurses.

Each year more than 110,000 people in England will suffer from a stroke, costing the NHS over £2.8

billion. It is England's third biggest killer (after heart disease and cancer) and the largest single cause of severe disability.

The Department of Health recognises the need to improve stroke services. The consultation aims to modernise service provision and deliver the latest treatments for stroke through all stages of the clinical pathway – including improving prevention programmes.

Nurses play a pivotal role in immediate care and rehabilitation for stroke sufferers. They also have a valuable role to play in championing stroke services locally and acting as stroke key workers. The new vision for stroke services will mean they work together in clinical networks across the whole care pathway.

The consultation runs until 12 October.

Nurses receive guidelines on funding distribution to fight HCAs

SHA nursing directors are being urged to allocate priority funding to projects with proven and effective solutions, as part of the £50 million drive to reduce healthcare associated infections (HCAs).

A professional letter from the NHS Chief Executive, the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), published in July, says proposals should show a clear and rapid impact on MRSA and C.difficile infections.

The money can be spent in any hospital setting on projects that can be justified by reference to established guidance, such as *Saving Lives/Essential Steps*. Examples of suitable proposals include:

- raising awareness of HCAs among staff
- training courses on infection prevention and control
- information outlets for both staff and patients that will support an increase in public and patient confidence.

Frontline staff must be involved throughout the

decision-making process and kept informed of successful proposals. SHA directors of nursing will contact trusts to explain the local arrangements for accessing funds and the timescale.

Trust chief executives must confirm that each project represents new expenditure to be spent on proposals that will have a significant impact on infection rates during this financial year.

The development comes as the latest Health Protection Agency (HPA) HCAI surveillance showed the third annual decrease in MRSA bloodstream infection numbers. However, the figures also showed that C.difficile infections continue to rise.

The new funding, announced in July, is intended to address this problem. Each SHA in England has been

awarded £5 million.

Directors of nursing are to find suitable schemes to invest the money in as soon as possible. Janice Stevens, Director for the MRSA and Cleaner Hospitals Programme at the Department of Health, is working with SHA nursing directors.

She comments: "Much progress has been made in reducing MRSA but more work is needed to ensure that good infection prevention and control is embedded into everyday clinical practice and that rates of C.difficile also come down. This money is aimed at support and frontline improvements, designed to keep patients safe, but also to help make it easier for staff to treat patients correctly in each situation and minimise the risk of infection."

Links and info

- Access the professional letter
- View *Saving Lives/Essential Steps*
- Further details on the latest MRSA and C.difficile figures from the HPA

Online tools to fight infection

Three online resources are now available to help nurses reduce infection rates.

Last month, BMJ Learning and the Department of Health jointly launched the latest in this range of resources: a video module to help fight C.difficile.

A total of 10,000 healthcare professionals are expected to view the online tool by the end of the year. It covers:

- how to diagnose and treat patients with C. difficile
- the importance of hand hygiene in preventing

infection

- the importance of the selective use of antibiotics
- the value of understanding the patient experience.

Last June, a new website was launched to provide a one-stop-shop for all the needs of healthcare professionals. The website www.clean-safe-care.nhs.uk provides a monthly e-bulletin on HCAs as well as information, training tools, news and details on

policy development.

Another site, www.infectioncontrol.nhs.uk, focuses on training. It is a comprehensive general learning programme on infection prevention aimed at all NHS staff, both clinical and non-clinical.

Links and info

- Access C.difficile: in association with the Department of Health
- Go to clean-safe-care.nhs.uk
- Go to infectioncontrol.nhs.uk

More nurses needed for link practitioner roles

A new report from the Healthcare Commission has highlighted the need for more nurses to take on link practitioner responsibilities to help reduce infection rates.

Links and info

- Download Healthcare associated infection: what else can the NHS do?

This involves leading staff on infection prevention and control best practice. *Healthcare associated infection: what else can the NHS do?* found that only 23

percent of trusts had nurse link practitioners across all clinical areas.

Other findings included:

- higher rates of infection in trusts with fewer link

practitioners

- no protected training time for link practitioners, which makes it more likely that trusts will not be on track to reduce MRSA by 60 percent by 2008.

At-a-glance

- annual report reiterates hand hygiene as crucial in reducing spread of HCAs
- nurses to lead in developing this social habit
- patients to be given handrubs to offer hospital staff and encouraged to challenge staff on their hand hygiene.

CMO report highlights hand hygiene in hospitals

Patients will be given alcohol handrubs to offer to nurses and other staff to drive down healthcare associated infections (HCAs).

The development was reported in the Chief Medical Officer's annual report, *On the State of Public Health*, which calls for a new drive to encourage nurses and others to adopt better hand hygiene in hospitals.

The move intends to put patients at the forefront of reducing infection by challenging healthcare professionals' hand hygiene.

As the link between the patient and the clinical environment, nurses have a crucial role to play in driving home the importance of

hand hygiene at all levels. The report says the message is clear: clean hands reduce the spread of infection, be it at home or in the clinical environment. It also urges an increased awareness of the national 'cleanyourhands' campaign, which focuses on encouraging patient involvement in the process.

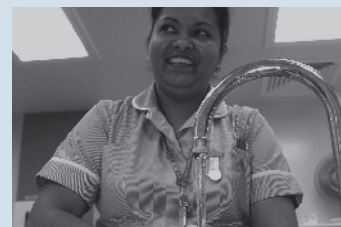
Going forward, it is envisaged that the head of the World Health Organization's 'Clean Care is Safer Care' campaign will be invited to lead and evaluate this patient empowerment programme.

A National Audit Office report found that HCAs cost the NHS approximately £1 billion per year. This equates to:

- a patient death every two hours
- 5,000 patient deaths annually
- a new infection occurring every two minutes.

Links and info

- Access the CMO's annual report
- Access podcasts of the annual report
- Cleanyourhands campaign



At-a-glance

- inquiry about physical healthcare access for those with learning disabilities
- nurses who work with the target group encouraged to contribute
- medicines, primary care and acute care access will be explored.

Nurses' input needed for inquiry into healthcare access for people with learning disabilities

An independent inquiry about providing better access to physical healthcare for people with learning disabilities has been launched.

Nurses who care for adults and children with learning disabilities are encouraged to contribute.

Questions for contributors will focus on issues such as:

- medical treatments
- how people get to see their doctor
- how to ensure people receive the right care

- what happens when hospital admission becomes necessary.

The inquiry, which aims to report within a year, will be chaired by Sir Jonathan Michael, formerly the Chief Executive of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust.

Learning disability nursing: good practice guidance

Nurses who work with people with learning disabilities can expect good practice guidance by the end of the year. It is currently in development and will be featured in a future bulletin.

Links and info

- Contribute to the inquiry

At-a-glance

- Code of Practice for all those working with those who lack mental capacity was issued in April 2007
- nurses will have liability protection if guidelines are followed
- Act takes effect fully from 1 October.

Links and info

- View Mental Capacity Act pages on Department of Health website
- View Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice

Nurses and the Code of Practice for Mental Capacity Act

The Mental Capacity Act was passed in Parliament in April 2005 and takes effect from 1 October.

The Act safeguards the interests of people who may lack mental capacity to make decisions and nurses need to be aware of its implications.

The Act creates a clear legal framework, and its Code of Practice (issued in April 2007) provides day-to-day guidance on appropriate behaviour for all nursing staff caring for people who lack mental capacity. Key points for nurses to note are:

- staff should communicate information in a way that makes it relevant and understandable for patients
- the definition of Mental Capacity is decision specific. If a person cannot make one decision, this does not mean they lack capacity to make other decisions. There is also a clear functional test to assess capacity
- the Act states that if a

person lacks mental capacity to make a decision, any decisions or actions on their behalf must be made in their best interests. Their wishes, feelings, values and beliefs should be taken into consideration, as well as the views of people close to them

- there is protection from liability for staff and professionals if they have followed the Act's guidelines and acted in the person's best interests.

The Act also introduces a new Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) service. An IMCA cannot give consent but represents and supports a person lacking capacity when they have no family or friends to do so, in specific circumstances. Nurses will need to know when to instruct an IMCA as part of their statutory duty.

People with capacity will have a statutory right to make advance decisions to refuse treatment for a time, in the future, when they lack capacity including the right to refuse life-sustaining treatment.

They are also able to create lasting powers of attorney to make personal welfare decisions on their behalf. A new Court of Protection has the power to create personal welfare deputies.

A new criminal offence of ill treatment and wilful neglect of a person who lacks mental capacity is included in the Act to deter people from abusing, ill treating or neglecting vulnerable people.

New training materials are available for acute staff and primary care.

At-a-glance

- RCN survey shows nurses are embracing electronic patient records (EPRs)
- trusts need to prioritise IT access
- nursing engagement will drive improved IT records which have the potential to transform clinical outcomes.

Links and info

- View the story on the RCN website

Nurses back EPR: says new RCN IT survey

A new Royal College of Nursing (RCN) survey has found that 66 percent of nurses welcome the introduction of electronic patient records (EPRs).

The finding was welcomed by Barbara Stuttle, National Clinical Lead, Connecting for Health, Nursing and Midwifery, who stressed the importance from a clinical point of view of the EPR.

She urged nurses to embrace the technology. She said: "Nurses are increasingly seeing the value of EPRs. Where IT systems work, nurses are actively wanting to use them more. We need to spread the word about how using IT can save time and benefit patients."

The survey also found that many nurses have reservations about patient confidentiality and information security.

Thirty percent said the EPR system would not be better than paper records. Barbara acknowledged concerns, but believes these will be outweighed by the benefits.

Susan Osborne, Director of Nursing Services at St Mary's NHS Trust, and National Clinical Lead, Connecting for Health, Nursing and Midwifery, said chief executives must now prioritise installing IT. She said: "Trusts need to recognise the importance of IT and improve access to equipment. Through SHAs, we need to see the chief executives of all NHS organisations allocating appropriate funding for IT

equipment. It needs to be a priority as without the 'kit', staff cannot engage with the programme. If we use IT properly, we can change clinical practice and improve care.

"We want to see more nurses and midwives coming forward and adding their input into the design of the electronic clinical care record which will make it fit for practice. It's not just about the technical people who create the systems; it's about the nurses, midwives and clinical staff working in partnership with the technical team designing the best solution that will be easy to use."

DH guidance to support community matrons and case managers

Fitness to Practice: an assurance framework for Community Matrons and Case Managers will this month be distributed to all SHA heads of workforce and PCT directors of nursing. The guidelines will help to ensure staff are competent to carry out the roles. It follows DH publications: *Case management competences framework for the care of people with long term conditions* and *Caring for people with long term conditions: an education framework for community matrons and case managers*.

Matrons national network

A new network has been launched for modern matrons within acute settings. Aims of the initiative include:

- promoting best practice to ensure an excellent patient experience
- developing a shared vision of leadership
- publicising performance indicators and benchmarks
- influencing national agendas and policy development.

Networking is usually via email and through the website.

- [Access Network NHS Website](#)

Keep Warm Keep Well campaign 2007/08

Annual advice on winter health, as well as information about financial and practical help for financially disadvantaged people over the age of 60,

those on disability benefits and young families on low incomes. The campaign begins in mid-October.

- [View the campaign website](#)

Inpatient safety

Guidance, *Acutely ill patients in hospital*, from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) looks at the most effective ways of monitoring hospitalised patients whose condition rapidly deteriorates. The National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) has also released a report, *Safer care for the acutely ill patient: learning from serious incidents*. It analyses 107 patient deaths in acute hospitals that were reported due to safety concerns. NPSA has also issued advice to NHS organisations about standardising wristbands for inpatients.

- [Download the NICE guidance](#)
- [View the NPSA report](#)
- [Read more about the NPSA's advice on wristbands](#)

Children's health

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), focusing on care and learning for children from birth to the age of five, will become statutory in September 2008. Nurses and midwives have an important role to play and should work closely with those in day-to-day contact with children in early-years settings.

- [View the EYFS package](#)

NHS Hospital at Night

In line with National Workforce Projects, the NHS Hospital at Night Team has launched two resources for trusts. *Developing the role of the nurse co-ordinator*, a

report with a revised set of competencies for this role. *NPSA risk assessment resource pack for Hospital at Night* contains templates and examples of clinical risk issues undertaken by trusts.

- [Download Developing the role of the nurse co-ordinator](#)
- [View more information on the NPSA Risk assessment resource pack](#)

Consultation on counteracting fraud in the NHS

Nursing directors' views are needed about a draft Code of Practice which sets out the requirements for counter fraud or security management specialists. The consultation closes on 4 October.

- [Access the consultation](#)

Healthcare Commission's annual report

Improving healthcare for patients through the annual health check, published in July, focuses on a number of issues around patient care:

- promoting a better experience of health and health care
- safeguarding the public
- focusing on inequalities, human rights and diversity
- taking the lead in coordinating and improving regulation
- building a world-class regulatory body.
- [Read the report](#)

Review of Independent Sector Treatment Centres

The quality of service and treatment from Independent Sector Treatment Centres (ISTCs) broadly matches the standard of care provided by the NHS, according to an independent review from the Healthcare Commission

(HcC). The HcC found data gaps which limited the comparison. It suggests ways to address these gaps to provide patients with more consistent information.

- [View the report](#)

IVF round up

● NICE fertility guidance due out next year will recommend three IVF cycles per patient.

● In the private sector, the Department of Health will work with the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority to ensure that patients are aware of the cost of their treatment in advance.

● The pre-legislative scrutiny committee's response to the draft Human Tissue and Embryos Bill supported a proposal to remove the 'father necessity' clause when considering patients for IVF.

- [View more information on Government proposals for improved IVF provision](#)
- [Access the pre-legislative scrutiny committee report](#)

Drugs strategy consultation

Drugs: Our Community, Your Say – A Consultation Paper, invites professionals and drug-users to comment on:

- public information campaigns
- drug treatment, social care and support for drug users
- protecting the community from drug-related crime.

The consultation closes on 19 October.

- [Access the consultation](#)

News in brief

HPA: annual figures on STIs

Diagnosed cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) rose by two percent from 2005 to 2006, says the fourth annual report from the Health Protection Agency. Findings include:

- chlamydia increased by four percent
- genital warts increased by three percent
- genital herpes increased by nine percent.

The number of HIV tests rose by 12 percent from 628,810 to 705,502.

- [Download the report](#)

Healthcare Commission: heart and diabetes reports

Managing diabetes: Improving services for people with diabetes makes recommendations such as integrating all healthcare professionals involved in a patient's care. *Pushing the*

boundaries – Improving services for patients with heart failure found that more NHS heart failure services are in place.

- [Access the diabetes report](#)
- [Access the heart failure report](#)

News in brief

Guidance section

New drug misuse guidance from NICE

Three new guidance documents relating to drug misuse and treatment have been published: *Drug misuse: psychosocial interventions*, *Drug misuse: opioid detoxification* and also general guidance on improving treatment for substance abuse.

- [View Drug misuse: psychosocial interventions](#)
- [View Drug misuse: opioid detoxification](#)
- [View improving treatment for substance abuse](#)

Other NICE guidance

- Varenicline is recommended for smoking cessation
- Abatacept (Orencia) belongs to a new class of drugs called co-stimulation modulators and is recommended for patients with rheumatoid arthritis
- [View the smoking cessation guidance](#)
- [Access the Orencia guidance](#)

Diary

CNO Annual Summit – Driving Confidence in Care
31 October – 2 November, London.

Directors of nursing should have received an invitation to this event. Queries regarding invitations to be directed to Fitchlive.

Call 020 7544 7625

- [Email for details](#)
- Register at www.eventsregistration.co.uk/cno2007summit/

A Practical Guide to Reducing MRSA: conference

14 November, Manchester.
Call 020 8541 1399 or visit www.healthcare-events.co.uk

A Practical Guide to Reducing Clostridium difficile: conference

28 November, London.

Call 020 8541 1399 or visit www.healthcare-events.co.uk

Infection Control Nurses Conference

24 – 26 September, Brighton.

Call 0161 301 6857

- [View the conference website](#)

RCM Midwifery Awards

Closing date: 1 November.

Entries are invited for nine categories.

Further details from Hannah Barnett on 020 8334 4500

- [View the RCM website](#)

Breaking Through Conference

15 October, London.

An event about employing people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly at senior levels.

Call 0177 276 7731

- [Email for details](#)

Latest publications

Make sure you're not missing out on new tools and guidance. Here is a round-up of recent publications from the Department of Health (DH) and beyond. DH publications are available from www.dh.gov.uk/publications

● Drug Safety Update

MHRA's new monthly bulletin Drug Safety Update, is now published online. The first issue is available at: www.mhra.gov.uk/mhra/drugsafetyupdate. Articles of interest to nurses include:

- dopamine agonists: pathological gambling, increased libido, and hypersexuality
- hot topics: smoking cessation aids.

● You and Your Little Child

CHANGE, a national organisation run by disabled people, has published *You and Your Little Child 1-5*. A follow up to *You and Your Baby 0-1*, the book is written to support parents with learning disabilities to bring up their young children. To purchase either title, contact Philipa Bragman on 0113 243 0202 or philipa@change-people.co.uk or visit www.changepeople.co.uk