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NEWS

Online training in nutrition care for all nurses

The Nutrition Action Plan from the Department of Health (DH) and a range of stakeholders is on course to achieve the aims set out at its launch in October 2007.



The Nutrition Action Plan Delivery Board held its first meeting in February and one sub-group chair has been appointed to drive forward each of the priorities, including free online training for health professionals.

Nursing issues are addressed by board members Debbi Dzik Jurasz from the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and Deborah Sturdy, the DH's nurse adviser for older people and dignity in care, with input from Josie Spencer, director of strategy and redesign

at Coventry Teaching PCT. The board hopes to learn from the excellent work already carried out by the RCN in their *Nutrition Now* campaign.

Deborah is looking at how to effectively communicate the important role that nurses play in delivering good nutritional care. She said: "Ensuring that patients receive adequate hydration and nutrition is an essential part of nursing care and recovery for patients. The work of the delivery board brings together experts to develop demonstrable

improvements in care. It also highlights the importance of assisting nurses and others working at the front line of services to build on their efforts in making a real difference to patient experience."

Taking action

A series of initiatives are already in progress including the launch of free online training in nutritional care for all nurses working in the NHS and other healthcare professionals working in the social care sector in May. The modules from the NHS Core Learning

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Diabetes specialist care in the spotlight

Diabetes care is at the forefront of the health agenda with a focus on diabetes specialist nurses (DSNs) and the appointment of a new diabetes 'tsar'.

DSNs are empowering patients and improving the detection and management of diabetes. According to Diabetes UK, DSNs are regarded "as the lynchpin of the healthcare team by

people with diabetes in their ongoing care".

The charity's comments were in response to a 12-month trial at the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust where

DSNs visited the emergency medical unit, proactively identifying people with diabetes. The nurses identified and reviewed 111

Continued on page 3

At-a-glance

- Nutrition Action Plan Delivery Board progresses
- nursing role is vital to provide good nutritional care
- screening to help early detection of malnutrition.

Links and info

- Further information on the Nutrition Action Plan

At-a-glance

- diabetes specialist nurses improve care
- study highlights resources saved
- new diabetes tsar.

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VOICEPIECE



Christine Beasley, Chief Nursing Officer, discusses the last 10 years of the nurse consultant role and gives an update on the wide-ranging *Our NHS, our future* review.

It is now 10 years since the introduction of nurse consultant roles. We have seen nurses and midwives pioneer these senior clinical roles in a whole range of settings, spending at least 50 percent of their time working directly with patients.

In the establishment of these roles, a strong clinical career has been opened up for nurses and midwives, offering them rewards of senior clinical responsibility and accountability for a clinical caseload.

Many of these consultants are central to the transformation of the health service and the integration of patient and client care across organisations. As a result,

patients and service users are able to access services faster and more easily and the quality of care is being improved.

Ten years on, there are further opportunities for nursing to grow and develop in order to benefit patient care. The *Our NHS, our future* review, led by Lord Darzi across England, has the ambition of building the NHS into a world class service where

care for all patients and users is "fair, personalised, effective and safe".

Much work is happening locally, with teams in every SHA working on improving services in eight clinical pathways. Nationally, teams have also been considering the future clinical workforce based on the plans for the NHS and this will inform the work that is about to start on developing career pathways

for midwives. You can read more about progress with Lord Darzi's work on the review website – www.ournhs.nhs.uk

Modernising Nursing Careers work fits well with Professor Lord Darzi's review. As part of this work, we have consulted on proposals for the future organisation of nursing careers. The findings of the consultation will be published in June.

NEWS

Online training in nutrition care for all nurses

Continued from page 1

Unit are aimed at frontline staff and managers, and will demonstrate the steps they need to take when screening patients for malnourishment as well as the basics of caring for people at meal times.

Further support for nurses will be provided in the form of a toolkit from the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA), which aims to help staff implement the Council of Europe Alliance UK's *10 key characteristics of good nutritional care in hospitals*. The document

acts as a checklist for staff to refer to and the NPSA is supporting it from a patient safety perspective to ensure that malnutrition doesn't become a risk. The toolkit will be released in April.

Early detection

Nutritional screening is also

gathering momentum. The British Association of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (BAPEN) plans to publicise detailed results from its nutritional screening week in March, which will show the prevalence of malnutrition in society as a whole and demonstrate

how nurses can help to address the problem by screening patients on admission to hospital or a care home. This would enable cases of malnutrition to be picked up prior to admission and the new knowledge could be used to help draw up care plans.

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Diabetes specialist nurses in the spotlight

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people with diabetes, of which 47 were discharged within 24 hours, potentially saving £111,000 per hospital.

Diabetes specialist nurse (DSN) at the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, Helen Atkins, said: "We wanted to evaluate the impact of DSNs on preventing unnecessary hospital admissions and reducing length of hospital stays.

"Our research shows how

proactive DSN intervention can facilitate more appropriate care and help save money.

"In addition, our trial only used a DSN from Monday to Friday and extending the service to weekends could generate even more savings."

The new National Clinical Director for Diabetes, Dr Rowan Hillson, agrees that the role of the DSN is key to driving forward improvements in the prevention and management of the

disease: "Each person with diabetes deserves the highest standards of personalised diabetes care and diabetes specialist nurses have a crucial role to play in this regard. We all need to work together to ensure that our patients have the best possible diabetes care." Dr Hillson, a consultant physician

and diabetologist at The Hillingdon Hospital, London, took up her new post last month.

Focusing on the prevention and early detection of diabetes is in line with the Prime Minister's vision for universal access to the right preventative health check-up.



Oral Glucose Tolerance Testing

"We have been a victim of our own success," admits diabetes nurse consultant Jill Hill, from Birmingham East and North PCT.

Jill and her team run a group oral glucose tolerance testing service in the community. The service, originally designed for the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement to use as a model for other PCTs, is now so popular, with up to eight calls a day for referrals, that they are looking to run another three clinics a week.

The service is available in English and Urdu. Up to 10 patients plus partners are invited to each session and in the two hours between the necessary blood tests participants have an interactive discussion led by a health educator. This covers possible diagnosis, the implications,

and what they can do to delay developing diabetes if diagnosed with impaired glucose tolerance, or to delay the progression of the condition if diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

Basic cardiovascular disease risk factors are measured too, including total and HDL cholesterol, blood pressure, BMI, waist circumference, and smoking status. A letter with all the results, what they mean, and recommendations for action is sent to the patient about a week later.

The service is certainly delivering results. "We have had people making remarkable improvements after their first visit," said Jill. "Some patients have lost kilograms in weight and as a result lowered their total cholesterol and reduced their waist circumference."

Links and info

- Read the Prime Minister's speech
- Read more about the trial at University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust

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Leading role for nurses in primary health care

The vital contribution that nurses make to primary care will be the focus of this year's International Nurses Day on 12 May. The theme for 2008 is 'Delivering Quality, Serving Communities: Nurses Leading Primary Health Care'.

The theme was chosen to highlight both primary health care and quality of care, particularly in view of the fact that this year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration of Alma Ata – the first international acknowledgement of the importance of primary health care.

Improving the quality of NHS services, including those in primary care, is also a key focus for the Government's world

class commissioning (WCC) initiative. This programme aims to dramatically transform the way health and care services are commissioned in this country, ultimately delivering better health, care and value for all.

Nurses are encouraged to take a lead role in primary care as both commissioners and clinicians. Areas where they can make an important contribution include:

- assessing local needs

- designing and developing future care services
- giving feedback on service quality.

Community nurses should value their ability to understand local needs and use it to bring a new level of expertise to all tiers of commissioning at PCT, practice based commissioning and joint commissioning levels to ensure that patient care and quality drives commissioning.

Viv Bennett, Deputy Chief Nursing Officer at the Department of Health, said: "As a nurse who has been involved in commissioning at all levels I have seen the positive impact that nurses can have on developing services. We aim to ensure that skills and systems are in place to enable nurses to deliver their full part in this exciting agenda."

International Nurses Day is a good opportunity to highlight these issues and a toolkit related to this year's theme is available on the International Council of Nurses (ICN) website.

Tackling obesity at a local level

Driving local initiatives to tackle childhood obesity is the key aim of a new guidance document, published last month.

Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: Guidance for Local Areas meets a commitment

in *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: A Cross-Government Strategy for England* to provide local areas with guidance on what they can do to promote healthy weight and tackle obesity.

Aimed at PCTs and local authorities, the guidance

suggests actions that the organisations will want to consider to deliver their childhood obesity goals as part of the NHS Operating Framework Vital Signs, and Local Area Agreements (LAAs).

The guidance also

provides ideas on how local partners can develop their own plans, from understanding the scale of the problem in their communities to setting local goals and choosing interventions where it is agreed that local action is required. This includes ensuring that progress is monitored and evaluated.

At-a-glance

- International Nurses Day highlights primary care
- improving services through world class commissioning
- strong nurse leadership encouraged.

Links and info

- More information on WCC
- Download the ICN toolkit

At-a-glance

- new guidance on obesity
- to support local action
- part of obesity strategy.

Links and info

- Read the obesity guidance

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Child Health Promotion Programme updated

The newly-updated *Child Health Promotion Programme (CHPP): Pregnancy and the first five years of life* was launched last month.

It builds on the children's national service framework (2004) and is intended to provide preventative services tailored to the individual needs of children and families. It also acts as

a best practice guide for children's services.

The programme aims to:

- provide greater emphasis on promoting the health and well-being of children in the early stages – through pregnancy and the first years of life

- support a model of progressive universalism – a core programme for all children with additional services for children and

families with particular needs and risks

- encourage partnership working between different agencies on local service development (for example general practices and children's centres)

- focus services on changing public health priorities, namely obesity, breastfeeding, and social and emotional development.

The CHPP is a valuable tool for supporting commissioners to meet obligations on breastfeeding, obesity prevention, infant mortality and the 12-week antenatal assessment. This high quality programme will help meet these vital requirements and work to improve general health and well-being among children and families.

At-a-glance

- builds on children's national service framework Child Health Promotion Programme
- focuses on public health priorities of obesity, breastfeeding, social and emotional development
- valuable tool for service commissioners.

Links and info

- Read the CHPP document

Mums are urged to continue breastfeeding

Encouraging new mums to continue to breastfeed for longer is the focus of the annual *National Breastfeeding Awareness Week (NBAW)* which runs from 11 to 17 May.

Current figures show that around 78 percent of women initiate breastfeeding but by six weeks this drops to under 50 percent. The awareness week will encourage women to seek support through various channels.

Gill Walton, Head of Midwifery at the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust, who has recently been involved in developing a breastfeeding strategy, comments: "We have agreed an evidenced-based programme to support the updated *Child Health Promotion Programme* within our service. We know that breastfeeding will help to

reduce childhood obesity levels and infection rates for gastroenteritis and urinary, chest and ear infections. It also benefits mothers by protecting them from some cancers."

From this month, PCTs will be asked to measure and report back data on breastfeeding rates at six to eight weeks, in addition to the breastfeeding initiative data already collected.

To encourage and promote breastfeeding, a number of free materials for health professionals are being produced including pens, lanyards, diary covers and post-it notes. All materials feature the strapline 'Breastfeeding – every day makes a difference to your baby' and the new National Breastfeeding Helpline number 0844 209 0920. To order contact Prolog on 0870 155 5455.

At-a-glance

- week runs from 11 to 17 May
- new support helpline on 0844 209 0920
- promotional materials available free of charge.

Links and info

- Access the NHS breastfeeding pages

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Improving mental health patient safety investigations

Guidance designed to improve and standardise the approach to independent investigations into serious patient safety incidents in mental health services, was launched by the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) last month.

The document describes the three main stages of the independent investigation process in detail. *Independent investigation of serious patient safety incidents in mental health services good practice*

guidance examines the initial service management review, internal NHS mental health trust investigations, and SHA independent investigations.

The document also looks at how NHS organisations

can support the victims of serious incidents, families, carers and perpetrators, and how to support staff and other affected mental health users.

Ben Thomas, Head of Mental Health and

Learning Disabilities at the NPSA, said: "This guidance is a practical resource, in particular for those who are faced with responding for the first time to such an incident. Dealing with the aftermath of a serious incident can be a daunting task for all involved and the guidance aims to help conduct independent investigations in a timely, co-ordinated and robust fashion, making the process as systematic as possible."

At-a-glance

- new NPSA good practice guidance
- to improve independent investigations
- includes support for victims and families.

Links and info

- Access the guidance

Travel costs scheme to tackle one million missed appointments

The Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS) is being extended to drive down the 1.4 million missed appointments caused by transport problems, including patients not being able to afford the cost of travelling to hospital and other places of treatment.

From 1 April, eligible patients will be able to claim the cost of travel for journeys made to receive non-primary medical or non-primary dental care

following referral by a GP, dentist or hospital consultant.

Nurses, particularly those working in outpatient and specialist clinics, are encouraged to make patients aware of the financial help that HTCS can offer.

This change will remove what is a substantial barrier to care for a significant proportion of the population, and ensure that no one misses receiving care because of financial constraints.

A free poster and explanatory leaflet are available from the Department of Health Publication Orderline on 08701 555 455 or by emailing DH@prolog.uk.com, quoting product references HC5 and HC11 respectively. HTCS helpline – 0845 850 1166.



At-a-glance

- more help with travel costs for patients
- Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme extended
- nurses asked to make patients aware.

Links and info

- Read more about the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme

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Mary Seacole Awards promoting equality and diversity in nursing

"Equality and diversity remains central to both the agenda for improvement of future healthcare and the current service provision," explains Dawn Atkinson, Nursing Officer for Diversity at the Department of Health (DH).

Part of this agenda includes the annual Mary Seacole Scholarship Awards, which are given in recognition of Mary Seacole's leadership and outstanding contribution to nursing. Applications for the 2008 awards are now open for entries from any nurse, midwife or health visitor.

The scholarship provides opportunities for successful

applicants to undertake a project or individual development which would contribute to informing the diverse health needs of black and ethnic minority people. Grants of up to £6250 are available for the development award and up to £12,500 for the leadership award.

During 2007 a total of six awards were made. The awards helped to support projects as well as individuals who undertook patient-led service changes that would benefit patients from diverse black and ethnic minority backgrounds where health inequalities had been identified.

Previous awards have funded the successful development of a teaching tool to raise staff awareness of equality and diversity in a PCT.

Further details and an application pack can be downloaded from the DH website.



L-r: Mandy Amin, Theo Machingambi, Florence Kanikasamy, Lihua Wu: 2006 award winners receiving their certificates on completion of their award year at the October 2007 ceremony. In the centre is health minister Ann Keen.

Links and info

- Read more about the Mary Seacole Awards

NEWS IN BRIEF

The Heatwave Plan for England

The heatwave season for 2008 will officially start on 1 June. Copies of the public information leaflet *Heatwave: A guide to looking after yourself and others during hot weather* will shortly be distributed for display in GP surgeries. Nurses, health visitors and other health and social care professionals are being reminded of the need to identify potentially vulnerable people who could be at risk of severe heat exhaustion or heatstroke before a heatwave starts. At-risk groups include older people, especially those over 75, and people taking certain types of medication.

- Access the 2007 heatwave plan

Influenza immunisation programme

The details of the annual influenza immunisation campaign have been published in a letter from the Chief Medical Officer, Chief Nursing officer and Chief Pharmaceutical Officer. National policy sets out that the vaccine should be offered generally to all those aged 65 and over, and specifically to all those over six months of age in a clinical risk group. The national publicity programme is set to be launched in October and PCTs and SHAs will receive order forms for promotional materials in the summer.

- Download the letter

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MRSA patient leaflet

The Department of Health has developed an information leaflet for patients in the community who have contracted MRSA. It covers information such as the difference between colonisation and infection, and gives useful advice on personal care and home hygiene. The leaflet's content reflects collaboration with key stakeholders including patients, PCTs, acute trusts and the Infection Prevention Society.

- [Download the leaflet](#)

LATEST PUBLICATIONS

Drug Safety Update

The April issue of *Drug Safety Update* is now available. Items of interest to nurses and midwives include:

- drug safety advice for contraceptive medicines, including an update on the risk of cervical cancer with oral contraceptives and on the risk of venous thromboembolism with combined hormonal contraception
- information about a new recommendation for genetic testing in some Asian populations before starting treatment with carbamazepine for epilepsy and other licensed disorders
- new advice on the safety of cough and cold medicines in children.
- [Access the bulletin](#)

Update on the Care Programme Approach

A booklet and summary leaflet for service users and carers on the Care Programme Approach (CPA) is now available on the Department of Health website. *Making the CPA work for you* sets out what carers can expect from the CPA and what changes will mean to the service. A DVD is also available.

- [Access the guidance](#)

Web links

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.

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National Plans for NHS 60

The NHS turns 60 in July. Anniversary celebrations will be locally-led and many NHS trusts already have exciting plans in place to mark the occasion. At a national level there will be a celebratory focus on the themes identified in Lord Darzi's *Our NHS, our future* interim report – namely, healthcare that is fair, effective, safe, personalised and locally accountable.

The anniversary week will be a pinnacle time for national activity. Planned events include:

- **1 July:** NHS Live and Health and Social Care Awards events held at Wembley Stadium
- **2 July:** a national service of celebration held at Westminster Abbey
- **5 July:** the day of the anniversary itself and organisations are encouraged to arrange their own local celebrations across England.

If you have plans to mark the occasion then let the dedicated NHS 60 team know by emailing nhs60@dh.gsi.gov.uk

The team is keen to receive any interesting anecdotes or photos of how the NHS has changed and developed over the last 60 years for potential publication.

Changes to contact details

Nurse directors should send changes of contact details to bulletin.subscriptions@dh.gsi.gov.uk

All other nurses, midwives and health visitors can send changes to dh_cno_amendments@etdsolutions.com