

# RCN daily bulletin

RCN Congress newsletter

Thursday 14 May 2009

**Thursday**  
at a glance!

**Don't miss:**

**Are you up for the diversity challenge?**

12.45pm–2.15pm  
The Majestic Hotel,  
Main Dining Room

**Legal, governance and finance review**

12.45pm–2.15pm  
The Majestic Hotel, Crush Room

**Clinical research nurse competency framework**

12.45pm–2.15pm  
The Holiday Inn Hotel, Ripley Suite

**Ensuring good palliative and end of life care**

12.45pm–2.15pm  
The Majestic Hotel, Ballroom

**Increasing nurses' awareness and understanding of dementia**

1.00pm–2.00pm  
The Holiday Inn Hotel,  
Harewood Suite 1

**Is intermediate care alive and kicking?**

1.00pm–2.00pm  
The Old Swan Hotel, Rose Room

**Up for debate**

**Emergency resolution: nurse or police officer?**

The ethical, professional and safety issues related to knife crime

**Foundation for a healthy future?**  
Is foundation status a healthy option for the NHS?

**Leading change for nurse leaders**

Developing a strategy to support directors of nursing with executive responsibility in commissioning

**APs – who needs them?**

Investigating where, when and why we need assistant practitioners

**NHS Ltd – worth the price?**

The impact of a finance-driven, business-orientated NHS on care

**Waste not, want not**

The impact of waste management and segregation policies on care

**Union matters**

The implementation of equitable and accessible trade union facilities agreements

**A word for dyslexia**

Influencing employers to recognise and provide for the needs of nursing staff with dyslexia

**Putting its house in order**

Has the NMC restored the faith of nurses in its fitness to practice?

**Diversity, equality, opportunity**

Does the diversity of Council reflect the diversity of RCN members?

**Millennium goals or own goals?**

Working to account for progress on achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals

## The advantage of vintage

Addressing a rapt audience of members, Sir Michael Parkinson urged Congress to celebrate older people, asking “What’s wrong with a wrinkle?”

As the Department of Health’s (DH) Dignity Ambassador, Sir Michael has travelled the length and breadth of the UK visiting care homes and hospitals to experience first hand the health care of the older generation. He spoke passionately about his belief that older people have become marginalised when they should be celebrated for their inspirational lives and wealth of experience.

Even as a practiced speaker, sharing the story of his mother’s decline into dementia with members was clearly a difficult task for Sir Michael. His voice cracked with emotion as he recounted the very personal events that led him to champion dignity and respect in care.

Congress heard that as part of his DH role he has listened to nurses

and patients’ experiences of dignity and the struggle to give quality of care. He described how he has grown to appreciate the complex issue but recognised the kindness, dedication and devotion of the nursing family and found it personally reassuring that there are public servants who care so deeply for the community.

*“Dignity in care will only happen if all of us appreciate and celebrate growing old instead of fearing it.”*

But, he said “It’s no good looking at just nursing, it’s about society and about respect in nursing and in life. It’s time we reminded ourselves of the old fashioned values of dignity and respect.”

Using archive clips from his chat show he showed members the granddaughter of Salvation Army founder William Booth, Catherine Branwell Booth, then 86, speaking of wanting to die with “eyes that were not dim and

with my natural strength unabated”. He said: “What a wonderful state to be in, not afraid of being old and still being vigorous. Dignity in care will only happen if all of us appreciate and celebrate growing old instead of fearing it. It should not be seen as a sad decline into dementia.”

On a lighter note, he added that on television “the audience loves it when you lose dignity; I’m talking about being attacked by that emu...”



## The assisted suicide debate – no easy answer

Yesterday’s debate on issues surrounding assisted suicide brought up viewpoints as diverse as the RCN membership. The fringe event saw nurses draw from their extensive professional expertise and very personal experiences of end of life care, as part of the RCN consultation that runs until 22 May.

Some members felt that helping someone to die goes against the caring nature of the nursing profession. Pat Cocker said: “We are nurses, not killers. We nurse, we love, we empathise.” Others felt that sometimes it is more caring to end suffering.

Professor Paul Wainwright from the RCN Ethics Forum

highlighted the emotional burden that would be placed on the person involved in assisting suicide. However, Professor Carol Haigh from Manchester Metropolitan University said: “Not helping someone to die can have an equally devastating emotional effect.”

Vicky Robinson, Nurse

Consultant in palliative care, believes that we should instead be focusing on supplying quality end of life care for all.

UK Learning Representatives Committee member Elizabeth Rees was concerned that nurses may be discriminated against because of their views.

The panel called for detailed and balanced research into the implementation of assisted suicide and euthanasia in other countries and its effect on nurses.

What are your views? Visit [www.rcn.org.uk/assistedsuicide](http://www.rcn.org.uk/assistedsuicide) to make a response to the consultation.



The RCN wishes to thank **LIVERPOOL VICTORIA** for their generous sponsorship of the Congress Daily Bulletin and **NURSINGSTANDARD** Congress 2009 Media Partner

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## Congress out-takes



### Congress turns the red light green!

Cari Mitchell from the Collective of Prostitutes addressed a packed Congress yesterday, explaining that the collective was a self help network that has defended the right for safety and recognition of workers in the sex industry since 1975.

"Prostitutes should be able to access health care without judgement or fear of persecution" Cari said, going on to cite an example in New Zealand where up to four sex workers can work together without a license, providing a safer environment.

She also spoke about the Safety First Coalition, set up following the tragic murders of five prostitutes in Ipswich and applauded the RCN's

involvement in the group.

Following the informed speech, delegates showed their overwhelming support for the resolution. Carol Watts from Cambridge branch who proposed the item said it was about the protection of workers, their safety and access to health care, not the rights or wrongs of the issue. She went on to say that prostitutes are "somebody's sister, mother or daughter... just like you and me".

Congress voted to change the wording of the resolution to 'That this meeting of RCN Congress makes appropriate recommendations to the UK government to allow up to four workers to work together legally before requiring a license'. The resolution was passed (93.43% in favour).

### A journey through time...

Gerard M Fealy uncovered the history of nursing apprenticeships and training as he delivered the Monica Baly lecture yesterday in the presence of Monica's niece Gillian.

From "nurses of poor station" and "ladies of social standing" to "promoting nurses' moral character" we learnt of the weird and wonderful ways nurses have been treated over the last 100 years.

Training in the 1860s did not exist and nurses tended to be older women recruited from the urban poor who were often rightly accused of improper conduct, poor care, poor hygiene

and sanitation and of neglecting their duty.

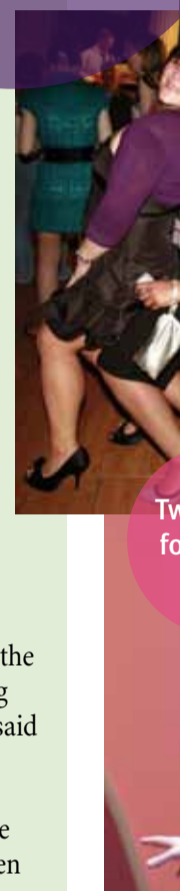
But the reform of the health care system from 1870-1890 led to a step-change in nursing training. Practical and theoretical training was provided by a nurse leader and nursing became a lifestyle choice, a "calling" for "ladies of social standing". Nurses were younger, better educated and disciplined, living a strictly regulated regime in nursing quarters with a specially designed uniform. It was standard to work a six day and 87 hour week!

From 1919 when nurses were required to be registered – a standardised syllabus and examination was the norm. Textbook orientated study was still strongly associated with etiquette

and character, and an emphasis on bed-side care.

The 1960s saw social, physiological and technical aspects of the role become paramount as the apprenticeship training began to come to an end.

Throughout the apprenticeship years, moral values dictated the art of nursing. Nursing student Stuart Young said "Our issues were very, very similar, although the uniforms may have changed we've still been discussing them at Congress this year!"



### Students go back to school to rock the night way

### Go forth and dignify

RCN President Maura Buchanan thanked members for enabling the overwhelming success of the RCN's innovative dignity campaign at a fringe event yesterday.

"Nurses want to make a difference, that's why they nurse" said Maura, describing how the campaign has helped thousands of members to recognise dignity issues. It's also given them powerful tools to help change behaviour and practice.

Sheila Kasaven and Martin Kelly, Manchester Mental Health & Social Care Trust, Jo James, Imperial Healthcare NHS Trust and Jim Marr from Barchester

Healthcare reflected on their experiences of using the campaign to improve the lives of those in their care and said how enthusiastically it's been received by not just nurses but the entire multidisciplinary team.

"It's not rocket science, small things make a big difference" is the resounding chorus from members, so keep up the good work!

Find out more about the campaign at [www.rcn.org.uk/dignity](http://www.rcn.org.uk/dignity)



At the heart of everything we do

### Vox pops

#### What was your highlight of Congress 2009?



'Cameron and Brown – it showed me that the views of nurses are taken into account

and that the voice of nursing is a voice to be reckoned with.'  
Dawn Bradford, Cambridgeshire



'Students' Day – meeting students was a fantastic opportunity to promote our hospital!'

Cj Capistrano, London



'Opportunity to socialise and network, which was enhanced due to the great crèche facilities.'

Daniella Pritchard, Eastern Region



East Mids grape reception



Come on and do the Conga-ress



Two, three, four... jazz hands!



Peter wings it on Nurses' Day

## Second chance

If you missed Wednesday's *Legal, governance and financial review* you haven't missed out. The event will be held again today in the Majestic Hotel Crush Room at 12.45pm.

## Question Time

Learning disability nursing, the numbers of male nurses and the new Commission on the Future of Nursing and Midwifery were among the topics addressed by RCN Chief Executive & General Secretary Peter Carter last night during a wide-ranging question-and-answer session.

On learning disabilities, Peter said that "major problems" remained with some provision, as recent scandals involving abuse had demonstrated. Some people with learning disabilities were still as isolated from local communities as they had been in the old institutions, he said.

Asked about the comparatively small numbers of men in nursing, he cited the late Trevor Clay, a former RCN General Secretary, as an inspiration, but said he wanted to see more young people coming into the profession, irrespective of gender.

He acknowledged that the new nursing commission faced an ambitious timetable given that it is due to report next spring, but added: "It's great the RCN was right in there saying "We want to be part of it."

And responding to a question about an impending black hole in public funding, Peter agreed that there were probable battles ahead. If nursing was not up to the mark, the profession would bear the brunt of any future cuts, he warned.

## Your NHS pension choice

Making an individual choice on the future of your NHS pension was the central theme at a fringe event yesterday, where staff from the RCN Employment Relations Department explained about the one-off choice scheme members will soon be making.

Outlining the basic differences in the pension schemes, Verity Lewis told members it was essential they study the personalised information on their pension options they will receive in the coming months. She advised members that, depending on where they are based in the UK, they will be asked to make their decision between July 2009 and November 2011.

Nicola Lee from the RCN Welfare Service said it was important to remember that the financial implications of retiring are not the only issue that should be taken into account. Health and wellbeing, interests, activities, relationships and social networks were all important to people considering their retirement options.

## Vaccine vote

Congress voted to support the right of young people to obtain equal access to the HPV (human papilloma virus) vaccine by a majority vote of 98.99%.

The HPV vaccine has been recognised as a major breakthrough in cervical cancer prevention. Kathleen Deeney of the RCN United and Homefirst Branch said that persistent sexually transmitted HPV infections are now recognised as a primary cause of cervical cancer.

Highlighting the vital need for equitable access to the HPV vaccine, Joy Winks of the RCN School Nursing Forum said that some schools have opted in to the national immunisation programme whilst others haven't. She went on to say that young people, including young men, need to be able to access the vaccine in other ways, for example, through GPs or health centres.

Kathleen closed the debate saying that nurses are advocates for the rights of young people and there should be equitable access to this preventative health care programme across all four countries of the UK.



The lifeblood bus gets a warm reception at Congress

## Criminalisation of HIV patients

Around 40 members heard a thought-provoking series of reflections on the rights and expectations of people who transmit HIV and other infections at a fringe event hosted by the RCN Northern Board. The event heard from a number of speakers, including Dr Brendan McCarron, an HIV clinician who broke confidentiality to try to prevent people becoming infected through unprotected sex with a patient with HIV.



'The learning and development opportunities available, and the excellent welfare services.'  
Patrick Mhlanga, Tees Valley



'The fringe events have been great - especially the management and leadership event.'  
Padmina Clark, Rugby



'I enjoyed all the speeches and lots of fringes. I would have liked to have gone to more but I couldn't fit them all in.'  
Christine Grant, Rugby



'Gordon Brown and David Cameron, who both appear to be in full support of the health service.'  
Patricia McGaughey, Antrim

## Your letters

### Congress – the next generation

I joined the RCN in 1968 when I qualified as a nurse (no students in those days). This year my daughter Alison, a clinical support worker, was eligible to join and was here at Congress for the first three days. Together we attended a range of activities, debates, fringe meetings, the exhibition and, of course, the Congress party.

Her first Congress has been an awesome experience for her, and I think she has seen Mum in a whole new light. She is planning to be here again as a student next year.

Thanks to the RCN for valuing all members of the nursing family, and for providing rich opportunities for the next generation of the nursing workforce to get involved and to keep the profession moving forwards.

Paula Hancock

### The future's bright

I'm back at Congress after a two-year break and this time I've been mostly on my own. However, I have met some wonderful people, especially the nurses of our future – the students.

It's their passion, their vibrance and their strong belief in their patients that make me realise what a wonderful profession I am in. That's what I'll take back with me. The passion for nursing. The passion for caring.

Susan Bell  
Senior Sister, Hinchingsbrook  
Dialysis Centre

### Smoking makes me gasp

I've been a trained nurse and a member of the RCN for over 30 years, but this is my first Congress. I have enjoyed the experience and indeed staying in Harrogate.

However, what does it say about a profession that asks to be taken seriously, that on every street corner in town and outside the conference centre itself, groups of nurses bearing RCN identification are seen to be smoking.

Healthy lifestyle debates? Let's be seen to be practising what we preach.

Jane Boyce  
Eastern Region



Visit [www.rcn.org.uk/archives](http://www.rcn.org.uk/archives) to learn more about nursing history

## Dates for your diary

If you've got the end of Congress blues, don't worry – there's only 346 days to Congress 2010! Make sure 25–29 April is in your diary for next year's event in Bournemouth.



If you can't wait until then, this year's AGM will be in Edinburgh on 28 October. Keep an eye on [www.rcn.org.uk](http://www.rcn.org.uk) for more details.



## In the round

Chaired by Kath McCourt, RCN council member and chair of the RCN's Public Policy Committee, our round table discussion today will focus on health and social care looking at the differences across the UK.

Joining Kath are Professor Richard Wyn Jones, Director of the University of Wales Governance Centre; Jo

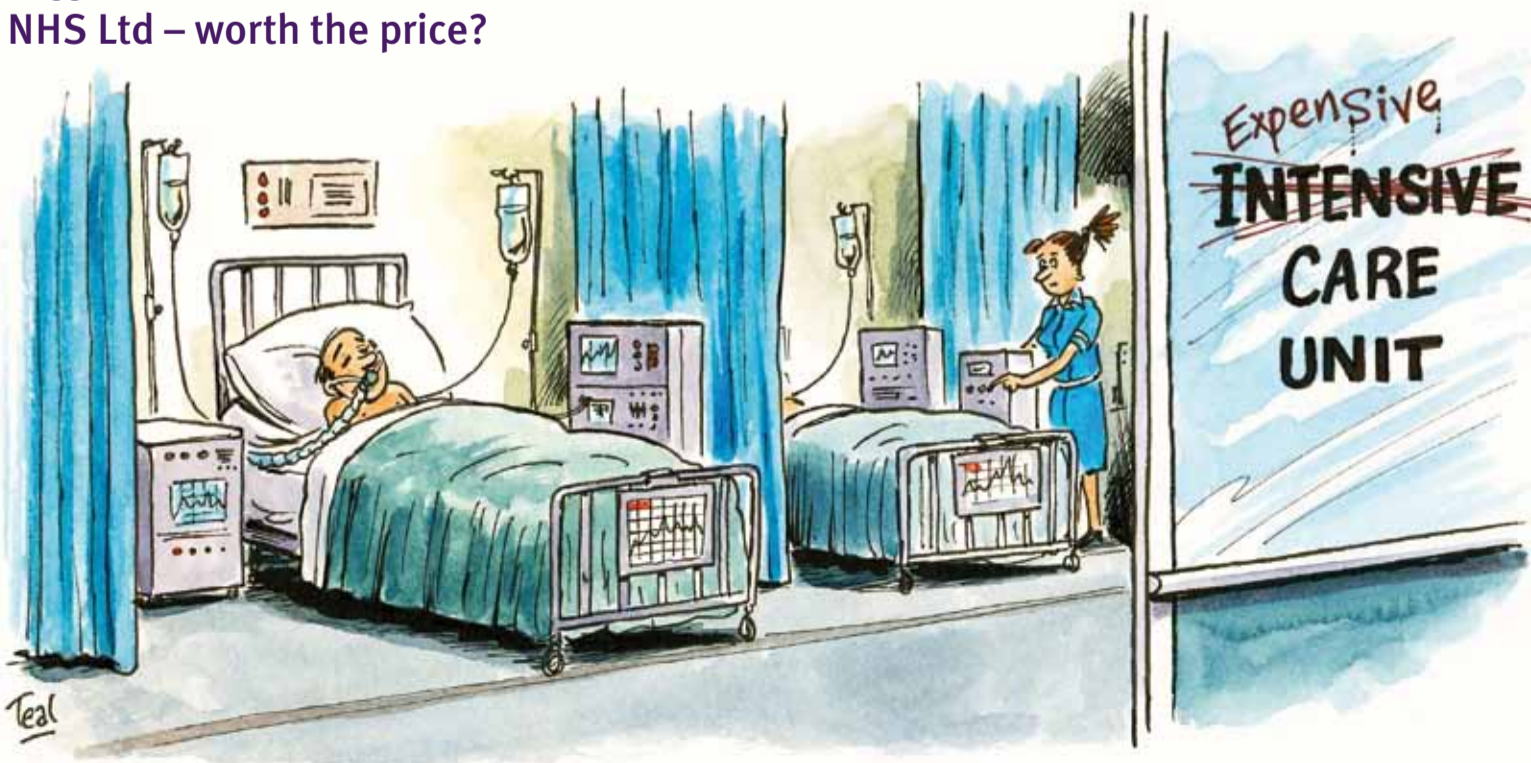
Webber Deputy Policy Director of the NHS Confederation in England; Zoe van Zwanenberg, former Chief Executive of the Scottish Leadership Foundation; and Colm Donaghy, Chief Executive of Southern Health and Social Care Trust in County Armagh

Round table discussion on health and social care – 11.15am in the Main Auditorium, HIC.

## So long...

We've reached the end of the run for this year's *Daily Bulletin*, but as usual we'll be back again next year. In the meantime, we'd love to hear your views about how we can improve the publication and also the bits you liked best. Drop us a line at [congressbulletin@rcn.org.uk](mailto:congressbulletin@rcn.org.uk)

## Gagged – the other side of the debate NHS Ltd – worth the price?



## Student perspective



What a heart-warming and touching speech we were all privileged to hear yesterday when Sir Michael

Parkinson spoke to Congress. Using his own experiences of the NHS, he talked of his passion around the dignity and respect we give to our patients and their relatives, showing us all what an impact we truly can make.

Yesterday afternoon was dedicated to fringe meetings and I attended the digital communications *You can get IT if you really want* event. RCN Deputy President Bobbie Chadwick gave a personal account of how she came to face the technology integral to professional development, and how the relaunched RCN Learning Zone can benefit every member.

This year's Monica Baly Lecture was co-hosted by the RCN Association of Nursing Students. The well referenced and informative talk explored the system of student nurse education over the last hundred years and beyond. Everyone present left a little wiser about how our profession has been shaped.

We're nearing the end of Congress, but in the last three days we have had the ANS resolution on uniforms passed; questions asked of Gordon Brown, David Cameron and Ann Keen by student members; 1,100 students attending Students' Day on Tuesday (our largest number ever); we've seconded and spoken in many debates and have been providing a clear voice for student opinions on the floor of Congress. Well done to everyone who's contributed to our most high-profile year to date!

Thank you all for making Congress 2009 a fantastic success for RCN students.

**Stuart Young**  
Executive Committee Member for the West Midlands and Consultant Editor, *The Answer*

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Thank you to all our contributors and everyone who stayed late!