

IN THIS ISSUE

Don't miss

Meeting with the Chief Nursing Officer of Wales
12.45-1.15pm Hermitage Hotel, Clifton Suite

RCN Membership Review
12.45-2pm Royal Bath Hotel, Gladstone Suite

Nick Clegg, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Party
14.30-15.15pm BIC, Main Auditorium

Andrew Lansley, Shadow Health Secretary
4-4.45pm BIC, Main Auditorium

John Goodlad Memorial lecture
6-8pm BIC, Main auditorium

RCN Student BBQ and Pink Party
6pm-1am Royal Bath Hotel, De Vere Suite



Up for debate

First aid training for children?
Should the government make the teaching of first aid to school children mandatory?

Too scared to care
Does the fear of litigation override our commitment to care?

Room for one?
Are single rooms in hospitals an aspiration too far?

Personality disorder – resource source
Lobbying for adequate funding and training for staff treating people with a diagnosed personality disorder

Children – ward or walk-in?
What are the implications of reducing the status of children's wards in district general hospitals to 18 hour ambulatory care units?

The RCN wishes to thank

Members ask the questions

Members were yesterday given the chance to question Gordon Brown when the Prime Minister attended the RCN's annual Congress for the second year running. Shadow Health Secretary Andrew Lansley and Liberal Democrat Leader Nick Clegg will speak to Congress later today.

Mr Brown drew a standing ovation from delegates and after his speech took questions, including one from Maurice Quinn who asked about young people joining the profession.

Mr Brown said he was very encouraged by the numbers of youngsters wanting to become nurses. "The status of the profession has never been higher – people value it more than ever – and nursing will be needed more in the future."

In his speech, Mr Brown paid tribute to nursing staff and their "amazing works of care and mercy". He told delegates: "You are a force for care and healing unlike any other and your service is the soul of the National Health Service."

Restating his own commitment to the NHS, he said: "Health is a fundamental human right and we believe in a service

free for all – no ifs, no buts, no maybes about it."

Following the recent report of the Prime Minister's Commission on Nursing, Health Visiting and Midwifery – commissioners included RCN Chief Executive & General Secretary Dr Peter Carter – Mr Brown said he wanted to see nursing staff in the NHS given more power. "Wherever we give nurses real control, real influence, you have been the force for progress." Any efficiencies savings would come from cutting management costs and reinvesting savings in frontline care, he said.

Another member, Richard Atkinson, asked Mr Brown about NHS pensions. To loud applause, the Prime Minister pledged to protect them, adding that



although "restraint" was likely across public sector pay over the next few years, he did not believe, "as others do", that a pay freeze is the way to create a better NHS.

Last year Mr Brown became the first Prime Minister in the RCN's history to address Congress. Speaking yesterday, he said: "I take comfort from the fact that I am the first Prime Minister ever to be invited back."

Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg will speak at 2.30pm and Shadow Health Secretary Andrew Lansley at 4pm today

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Frontline First

The RCN will fight to protect members' jobs and cuts that threaten patient care, Dr Peter Carter said yesterday.

In a speech to Congress, the RCN's Chief Executive & General Secretary said the NHS was the envy of countless countries around the world and one of the UK's best-loved institutions. But he warned of a hard battle ahead if services are to be protected. "This fight may be long, it will be tough and it will need every drop of energy and enthusiasm we have – but I have no doubt that we're all up for the challenge and determined to win."

Dr Carter acknowledged the investment made over the last ten years, calling on future leaders to ensure frontline services are protected.

He said one of the biggest myths in the NHS was that cuts and efficiencies would only begin to bite in a year's time. "No," he said, "they're happening now."

He listed examples from around the UK where many hospitals were already beginning the drive for further efficiencies. He added: "We will fight the cuts that we know will hurt patient care and we will fight for your jobs."

He acknowledged that in the current economic climate, there is a need to use resources responsibly, and nursing staff have to be open to new ways of work and open-minded about new services. But, he said, the RCN's Frontline First campaign, being

launched within the next few weeks, will expose where cuts are being made and patient care is suffering. It will also highlight where members are seeing waste and saving money.

Elsewhere in a wide-ranging speech, Dr Carter thanked members for their passion and commitment and in particular RCN activists, without whom the College would not survive.

He paid special tribute to defence nurses deployed to Afghanistan. "Their courage, dedication and unwavering commitment to caring for our servicemen and women is an inspiration to us all," he said, as delegates rose and applauded defence nurses seated in the auditorium.



CONGRESS NEWS

RCN calls for more transparency

Many NHS foundation trusts have a closed-door culture and are failing to involve staff and patients in key decisions – according to a survey revealed at RCN Congress today.

The RCN found nearly half of all foundation trusts hold board meetings in private. A third of respondents said there were no regular mechanisms to give feedback to the board through processes like surveys or facilitated events.

The RCN believes trusts must be open and honest with staff and the public at a time when the NHS is expected to save £20billion over the next three years.

RCN Chief Executive & General Secretary Dr Peter Carter said: “Today’s report

contains some alarming figures that suggest foundation trusts are not living up to their promise to provide an opportunity to engage staff and patients in a meaningful way.”

He added: “Our report is timely as there are still many trusts aspiring to join the 129 which already have foundation status. Nurses play a crucial role in innovating services which will help to save money in the long run – at the moment their potential is simply not being harnessed.”

Nearly 400 nurses spread across the 10 English strategic health authorities responded to the survey.

Read the full report at www.rcn.org.uk/policy

RECEPTIONS

Delegates were welcomed to Congress at a host of country and regional receptions on Sunday evening.



Northern Ireland



East Midlands



London



Northern



Eastern



North West



Wales



South East



Nursing Standard disco



South West



Yorkshire and the Humber



Scotland



West Midlands

ANDREW PARKER

Hats off to Andrew

Congress paid tribute to one of its most regular speakers as Andrew Parker, who passed away earlier this year, was remembered with a warm round of applause from delegates.

Andrew’s sons Chas and Philip were presented with a book of tributes and photographs of their father, who was particularly known for the collection of assorted hats which he sported at Congress.

Chair of Council Jason Warriner said Andrew was a supporter of the RCN, and colleagues in the College would have known him for up to 30 years. “I will remember Andrew for always being first in the queue and for his large collection of hats”, he said.

FRINGE EVENT

The way that we do it

Former RCN Director of Northern Ireland and now Northern Ireland’s Chief Nursing Officer, Martin Bradley, led the well attended fringe event which focussed on the upcoming dramatic decline in health care funding and how it will impact on nursing staff, service provision and patient care.

Martin said that services cannot be sustained as they are and the current system needs to be reformed and streamlined with drastic efficiency savings whilst not compromising high quality patient care. This, seemingly impossible, task will be achieved through the redesign of health care



as we know it, smoothing out regional disparities, maintaining the best services whilst re-evaluating the challenging ones, and working in partnership with the independent and voluntary sectors. Speakers urged Northern Ireland members to make their professional voice heard to drive the changes from ground up and be advocates for change. Nursing staff need to make the changes and create the solutions, rather than being dictated to, they said. The benefits of reform may not be seen for years, but will be our legacy and be of paramount importance considering the increasing and ageing population.

FRINGE EVENT

Lessons from private sector?

Congress delegates feel the NHS should learn lessons from the private sector in providing reactive occupational health services to its staff.

At a fringe on NHS staff health and wellbeing on Monday, the audience agreed that improved private-sector style services would see work-injured nursing staff returning to work faster, with frontline staff fast-tracked to key services like physiotherapy.

Cynthia Atwell, Chair of the RCN’s Public Health Forum, said: “Trusts have occupational health services but they are all different. The NHS is the biggest employer, but it does not manage it like other big national companies.”

The Boorman review into NHS staff health and wellbeing found 10.3 million days a year were lost due to absenteeism which cost £1.7 billion.

HCA’s DAY

Who cares wins – a stronger voice for HCAs

The RCN restated its commitment to campaigning for regulation of health care assistants (HCAs) at the second ever day held specifically for them at Congress. More than a hundred delegates gathered at the Pavilion Theatre to hear how they can get more involved with the College and become fully embraced within the nursing family.

RCN Wales Director Tina Donnelly gave the keynote address and



Teaching empowerment to HCAs

urged those who attended to have a voice in discussions about safe and effective care. She said: ‘Health care assistants are becoming increasingly influential so we need to have the debate about regulation, licensing, training and accreditation. We must have standardisation in the quality of care that’s being delivered across the UK.’

Empowerment and assertiveness were also key themes of the day with Council member Tracey Budding sharing her story of climbing through the ranks from nursing auxiliary to registered nurse. She proposed the initial resolution at Congress seven years ago to open out RCN membership to HCAs. Promoting the role continues to be a priority for RCN Council and Tracey assured delegates how passionate she feels about the issue.

RCN ELECTIONS UPDATE

The call for nominations for a number of RCN positions was launched yesterday by Jenny Booth, Council Member for the South East, at a special fringe event – *Get elected to an RCN role*.

Roles up for election include RCN President and Deputy President, Chair and Vice Chair of Congress, Board and ANS members. If you enjoy getting involved and want to take the nursing agenda forward, then standing for election is the first step to making a contribution that counts.

More information can be found at www.rcn.org.uk/elections, or pick up the leaflet *Be part of our future* from the publication stand in the RCN Lounge.

Recession – the challenge

Tonight guest speaker Robert Hill, former special adviser to Tony Blair, will talk to nurse managers at an event designed to consider the impact of the economic downturn.

If you are a nurse manager and would like an insight into how to influence your trust board when making difficult financial decisions then come along to the Gladstone Suite at the Royal Bath Hotel, 6.00 – 8.00 pm.

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EXPRESS



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Vox pops – highlights of Monday

Joy Pepper
Billy Dixon was the real highlight for me. He was so animated and provided some truly practical tips on how to present yourself more effectively.



Sally Douglas
I’m the only HCA at the GP surgery where I work so being able to meet likeminded people and share experiences has been fantastic.



Tracey Simpson
This is the first RCN event I have been to and it’s been so useful to find out what development opportunities are available.



Roxanne Bantilan
I’ve found the whole day really valuable. I hope to go on and qualify as a registered nurse so this has inspired me and given me hope that this can become a reality.



John Devenrey
Reassurances from Gordon Brown regarding NHS pensions and NHS funding.



Sarah Woodhouse
The palliative care debate – there’s not enough support for rural communities.



Mo Nowrung
Reassurances the Prime Minister gave regarding commitment to no cuts and more continuing development – whilst being nationally and globally realistic.



YOUR LETTERS

Got something to say?

Heroin could save lives?

The matter for discussion on whether heroin should be provided on the NHS as an alternative to current drug misuse treatments informed us that the current picture of drug misuse, prison, treatment and crime is very costly to the public purse in terms of effectiveness. Whichever party forms the next government all of this should be reviewed, including input from the RCN as drugs misuse is a major public health issue.

Heroin users are most at risk when released from prison. Some die upon their first community injection – this is because prison supply is dilute. The post prison time is a time an NHS dose could save lives and this would be a challenge to organise.

Sue Haworth
RCN North West Region

Re-visioning palliative care

Thank you to those who expanded the debate *Caring to the end* to add emphasis about palliative care for people with dementia. I want to reinforce this and to recommend that palliative care needs to be totally reconsidered to properly prioritise the ‘tsunami’ Sir Terry Pratchett has advised us to prepare for.

On Sunday, our President, Maura Buchanan, reminded us to expect one million people with dementia within 15 years. Add to that the support needed for at least one million of their informal carers, often ill and disabled themselves.

With dementia, dying well with dignity over a number of years means problems are not pain or chest secretions but instead paranoia, aphasia, wandering, violence, aspiration on swallowing and above all the need for a new form of compassionate communication.

We need an urgent, radical and entirely new palliative care service for this core group of people and their carers.

Sue McBean
RCN Older People’s Forum

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE



Welcome to Students’ Day.

Today is the day when an army of pink t-shirt wearing students take over Congress.

This morning students will be making their presence felt in the main auditorium, joining in the debates and discussions. Later they will be making their way to the exhibition hall to take the opportunity to speak to potential employers as well as influential organisations. In the afternoon we have a dedicated students’ programme at the Pavilion theatre where the interactive RCN Student Bus will be parked.

Our fun-packed afternoon is entitled ‘Reach Your Destination’, showcasing the best in continuing professional development. The conference will include a visit from Billy Dixon who will deliver his hilarious talk on how to present yourself whether on placement or in job interviews, and much more.

In the evening we’ll be taking over the Royal Bath Hotel with a steel drum band and BBQ. Entertainment will also be provided by inclusive band MiXit as well as a DJ.

Students with any queries or concerns should go to the student enquiry point in the BIC, or grab a member of the ANS Executive Committee in the Pavilion Theatre.

Stuart Young
Consultant Editor,
the Answer



NEWS STORY

Power to the pedals!



This year’s Congress fundraising efforts got an extra push from members of the RCN Executive Team who cycled from RCN HQ in London all the way to Bournemouth.

During the ride David Cooper, Janet Davies and Tim Golbourn raised money for Dementia UK, chosen by RCN President Maura Buchanan as the 2010 Congress charity.

The saddle sore trio arrived in Bournemouth on Sunday morning raising more than £4,500, but you can still make a donation via www.justgiving.com/Team-RCN or look out for the donation buckets around Congress.

Up for debate:



SNAPSHOTS OF CONGRESS PAST



Queuing for the microphone was just as thrilling in 1991. Don’t miss Future Congress (Wednesday 5.30pm, Main Auditorium, BIC) to help shape the event in years to come.

GET IN TOUCH

Don’t forget you can email us at congressbulletin.rcn.org.uk or call us on 01202 556893

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