



P-04-479 Tywyn Memorial Hospital X-ray & Minor Injuries Unit Petition – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee

TYWYN & DISTRICT HEALTH CARE ACTION GROUP. GRWP GWEITHREDU GOFAL IECHYD TYWYN AR CYLCH

11th February 2014

Re: Tywyn Memorial Hospital X-ray & Minor Injuries Unit Petition

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the correspondence of 20th January 2014 from Geoff Lang, Acting Chief Executive of BCUHB in response to the information we provided via the Petitions Committee.

We would like to emphasise once again that, as representative of rural areas in mid-Wales, we are, in terms of this petition, specifically looking for fair treatment in respect of availability of unscheduled care in this area.

In his letter Mr Lang says “we have also retained minor injuries services at GP practices in the rural areas” and lists Tywyn as such a place. For Tywyn that statement is NOT true. The GP practice does not provide a service for unscheduled treatment of minor injuries. (I checked with the practice today).

In any case, for 6 months of the year it is as if the people of Tywyn & area do not matter or exist at all after 6pm or at weekends! The only service available for people to contact at these times is the inadequate Out of Hours service. They will then most likely be asked to travel great distances to be checked, normally either 120 or 140 miles round trip – not possible by public transport.

It is therefore not surprising that they will go to a place where they know service is available 24 hours a day, our nearest A&E at Bronglais Hospital, Aberystwyth. **This must cost BCUHB because it is run by a different Health Board.**

We know that local health professionals are also not happy with this situation. Many of them would prefer to see longer hours of local unscheduled care available throughout the year for their patients by whatever means.

Mr Lang's assumption that minor injuries do not usually need immediate treatment may, in general terms be valid, but it ignores the welfare of the patient or relative who may well not know that until they receive attention & guidance by somebody who has expertise & skill to reassure them. I have personal knowledge, in the last 12 months of

- A man who fell & put his head through a glass door in the evening & because he had no means of transport, and the minor injuries unit was not open, waited overnight to get treatment the next day.
- A man who had a dog bite & also decided to wait until examination was available.
- A child with breathing difficulties whose mother was extremely worried because her child had previously had pneumonia and was directed by the Out of Hours service to make a round trip of 140 miles with a sick child!

I don't believe that cases like these point to fair & equal treatment. Any of those could have had very much more serious consequences.

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We are aware that the Health Minister & CHC agreed to the reduced hours of the MIU in Tywyn, but the Health Minister, in his statement of 17th July 2013 wrote “the demand for the service will be monitored & reviewed over a longer period The Health Board will need to have plans for implementing and communicating its proposals so that people can be confident they will get the minor injuries services they need”.

There is no such confidence within the community of getting the services they need.

How does the Health Board intend to monitor the demand of people who are not able to get the service they need or go elsewhere?

The development of Tywyn Hospital is welcome but it remains to be seen what benefits will arise for the community because it will depend on the provision of services & availability of trained staff.

As stated in previous correspondence, we are also concerned about retaining good services from our nearest General Hospital at Bronglais, Aberystwyth. The Health Minister has commissioned a study of Health Care in Mid Wales. A copy of his statement is attached.

As a group we, in collaboration with patient groups from Aberystwyth & Machynlleth, have already had opportunity to comment on the terms of reference for the study and expect to play a part in the subsequent stages of the study. We obviously hope that the report, due to be completed in September 2014 does not remain on the shelf but will bring ongoing benefit to the people of Mid Wales.

Once again we repeat - the BCUHB aim of “**providing equality of access and service provision across the region**” has NOT been met and indeed **the equality of service has been reduced.**

Brian Mintoft
Secretary