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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board

National Assembly for Wales
Public Accounts Committee
PAC(4)-27-14 (Paper 2)

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Dyddiad / Date: 22nd October 2014

Mr. Darren Millar AM
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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Dear Mr. Millar

Governance Arrangements at Betsi Cadwaladr University Local Health Board

Many thanks for the letter which you sent to me in your capacity of Chair of the Public Accounts Committee for the National Assembly for Wales.

This is my response to the main question therein, regarding how I carry out my role as Board Champion for Infection Prevention and Control. However, if there is any additional information you require when you have considered this response please do let me know and I will be more than happy to be of assistance.

I was appointed as Champion for this crucial area of the Health Board's activity in March 2014 and to date I have exercised my role in the following ways:

- Holding regular meetings with the Executive Director of Nursing; Assistant Director of Nursing, Infection Prevention; Medical Director; and the Head of Operational Estates Department. These meetings allow me to:
 - Be briefed both on how the Health Board is progressing in its aim to lower the prevalence in its Healthcare Acquired Infection rates;
 - Support the various officers in identifying any blockages to progress this;
 - Ensure the resources allocated to this important area of work are adequate; and
 - Allow me to speak using information that is accurate and up to date on these issues as they pertain to Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCU HB).

Cyfeiriad Gohebiaeth ar gyfer y Cadeirydd a'r Prif Weithredwr / Correspondence address for Chairman and Chief Executive:

Swyddfa'r Gweithredwyr / Executives' Office, Ysbyty Gwynedd, Penrhosgarnedd, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2PW **Gwefan:** www.pbc.cymru.nhs.uk / **Web:** www.bcu.wales.nhs.uk

- Making regular visits to BCU HB sites, including both acute and community hospitals to see how the issue of Healthcare Acquired Infection prevention is being dealt with. This includes speaking with front line staff (including cleaning teams as well as nursing and medical staff); visually inspecting the environment to be assured of the cleanliness of the areas, together with the provision of appropriate consumables; and bringing any issues back for discussion with colleagues.
- Meeting with the Infection Prevention Teams at the Health Board's various Hospitals to explore how they are approaching these issues.
- Attending the Strategic Environmental Cleanliness Group, which is a sub-committee of the Strategic Infection Prevention Group, which subsequently reports through to the Quality and Safety Committee.
- Meeting with key external advisors to BCU HB, i.e. Professor Brian Duerden, so that I am assured of the Health Board's progress towards meeting the targets it has set for reduction in its Hospital Acquired Infection rates.
- Meeting with Public Health Wales colleagues to keep myself updated on national / international developments related to Hospital Acquired Infection issues. I then use this information to assure myself and Board colleagues that the courses of action being recommended to the Board are appropriate.

In addition, I am actively involved in the wider Infection Prevention agenda as it relates to infectious diseases and their prevention in North Wales. I am in regular contact with the BCU HB's Director of Public Health to support the work of his team where appropriate, i.e. in their annual flu vaccination campaign. In addition in order to assure myself that the Health Board is prepared for epidemic / pandemic infections, I have acquainted myself for example with the current plans, to respond to a potential break-out of Ebola in the Health Board's area and receive regular briefings on the same. I also discuss the Health Board's progress towards meeting and / or maintaining its progression towards meeting national targets for a range of immunisations, particularly those for childhood diseases.

You also requested information on the actions we have taken in the Health Board to achieve the improvements seen to date. As you would imagine this involves a very wide range of issues, and I set out below a summary of some of the key actions to date:

- Infection Prevention Staffing: The Health Board has significantly invested in the corporate infection prevention service. It has appointed an expert lead nurse, who has now been in post for 1 year, and has recently secured the services of senior clinician with expertise in microbiology to support its work. It has also put in place effective leadership arrangements for its antimicrobial pharmacist team. As a result BCU HB has in place an integrated infection prevention improvement programme, based on Professor Duerden's recommendations.

- Focus on Antimicrobial Prescribing: The Health Board has put in place an antimicrobial prescribing policy for acute care, supported by a range of guidelines on the prescribing of specific antibiotic agents. To ensure staff are aware of the guidelines, they were launched on European Antibiotic Awareness Day 2013, supported by educational activity, posters and a pocket guide issued to all prescribers. In August 2014 BCU HB also launched a micro-guide 'app' for smart-phones, containing its policy and guidelines to support easy access for its prescribers. The Health Board recently launched an audit of antimicrobial prescribing and is working to encourage all medical teams to participate. In addition, it has produced antimicrobial prescribing guidelines for primary care to encourage prudent prescribing by General Practitioners. Over the past year there has been a significant reduction in prescribing of antibiotics high-risk for *Clostridium difficile* infection in general practice.

The following key actions illustrate how Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board has improved its performance in relation to Health Acquired Infections:

- Focus on Key Practice Standards: The Health Board has implemented a focus on 10 key practice standards, which when performed consistently to a high standard are known to significantly reduce the risk of *Clostridium difficile* infection. This includes hand hygiene compliance, isolation practices, and the cleaning of commodes. When a case of *Clostridium difficile* infection occurs BCU HB has implemented rapid review audits of these practice standards as a collaboration between the Infection Prevention Nurses and the ward staff. This has led to a significantly improved awareness of the standards required and improved subsequent audit scores reflecting improved practices.
- Focus on Environmental Cleanliness: The Health Board have reviewed its cleaning systems, processes and monitoring arrangements for the latter. BCU HB has implemented a chlorine-detergent product called Actichlor-plus for routine cleaning in 2013 as an initial improvement. Subsequent review has led to a successful trial of a microfibre cleaning system. The Board is now investing in the roll-out of this system across its estate, which will deliver improved removal of bacteria from the environment, improve general environmental cleanliness, and improve the frequency of cleaning some key items.
- Improving Root Cause Analysis (RCA) Methodology: The Health Board has implemented the National Patient Safety Agency's 'Learning Through Action' tool to perform RCAs on deaths and severe cases of *Clostridium difficile* infection. This has resulted in improved learning over the past year and a 'Lessons Learned' summary is circulated across the Health Board each month to share that learning. The number of patients with *Clostridium difficile* infection being recorded on their death certificate has decreased with to less than 1 per month, and the Health Board continues to focus its efforts on reducing the numbers still further.
- Medical Leadership: BCU HB's Medical Director has taken an active role in promoting the importance of prudent antimicrobial prescribing and medical

leadership in the prevention of Health Acquired Infections. This has included hosting an evening workshop with key medical leads to explore what the role of doctors should be and how the Health Board can support them to demonstrate leadership within their clinical areas.

- The Health Board has developed and is implementing clear strategies and action plans for all the routine Childhood Immunisation Programmes, including the MMR vaccine to ensure processes are in place to follow up with vigour children who miss immunisations. In relation to our immunisation uptake rates, the latest COVER report (period to June 2014) shows the Health Board is continuing to exceed the 95% target for scheduled vaccinations for children up to their 2nd birthday. The MMR 1 rate for children under 16 is now above the 95% uptake level, with the MMR 2 rate reaching 90%, just short of the target.
- In relation to the 'Flu vaccination', the Board achieved a 71% coverage of target groups in the community in 2013, with the Health Board's staff uptake increasing by 5% to 41%. The Board is pursuing an active campaign in the current flu season to continue to improve on this performance. The staff campaign is multi-faceted, building on best practice from outside Wales and involves training clinical staff to give the vaccine to colleagues, making it easy to access. I will be actively monitoring our progress during the campaign and reporting on this to the Board.

In terms of executive responsibilities for Infection Prevention and Control, this rests with our Executive Director of Nursing & Midwifery, Angela Hopkins. I know that Angela would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss all these issues, together with the Lead Nurse, Lead Doctor and the Lead for Antimicrobial Prescribing across the Health Board. Please contact Angela if you would wish to take this forward via her secretary, Marina.Marzelos@wales.nhs.uk or by telephoning 01248 384212.

I trust that this letter answers your questions, and provides you with the assurances you are seeking. If I can be of any further assistance, or if you would like to meet me in person to discuss these issues, please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Margaret Hanson
Vice Chairman
Is Gadeirydd

