News & Opinions

Funding boost for Scotland

NHS boards in Scotland have pledged to spend millions on more dental facilities, after they were given an extra £82m by the Scottish government to spend on healthcare.

Health boards have pledged to make dental care a top priority and improve dental provision in their areas.

There are proposals for 13 new standalone dental centres as well as new surgeries and facilities upgrades.

The 13 new dental centres in Scotland are planned for: NHS Ayrshire and Arran: Cumnock, Ayr; NHS Fife: Levenmouth, Glenrothes, NHS Grampian: Fraserburgh, Huntly; NHS Highland: Oban, Campbeltown, Thurso, Inverness; NHS Orkney: Kirkwall; NHS Tayside: one planned (location to be confirmed); NHS Western Isles: Stornoway.

Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon said: 'In the tough climate we find ourselves in, capital projects are a crucial way for the government to stimulate the economy by providing local employment opportunities. Since May 2007, this government has made NHS dentistry a top priority and these projects are further evidence of our determination to reverse the years of decline seen under previous administrations.

Already, we have seen the number of dentists rise and the highest ever number of dental registrations for both adults and children. And the opening of Scotland’s third dental school in Aberdeen in October last year will see more and more trained dentists entering the NHS.

I expect these new proposals from NHS Boards to further enhance dental access right across Scotland, as we strive to give Scots a dental service to be proud of.’

Andrew Lamb, the British Dental Association’s director for Scotland, said: ‘Today’s news provides recognition from the Scottish government of the significant problems that people in many areas face gaining access to NHS dentistry. For some of those people this investment will be good news, providing facilities for NHS dentistry where it wasn’t previously available. The new premises will provide high quality environments for the practice of dentistry and that is to be applauded.’

However’, he added ‘there has been an ongoing problem of finding dentists to work in remote rural sites and more will need to be done to address this. A significant number of people across Scotland will, unfortunately, continue to be without access to a dentist. Today’s announcement is just one step in finding a solution to this problem, The Scottish government must also pay careful attention to the needs of the many independent dentists who will not be working in the new dental centres. It was promised that some of this funding would be deployed to help high street dentists adapt to changing decontamination regulations and it is important that they are properly supported as they do this and continue to provide high quality care to the large numbers of patients they see.’

Colgate’s new Interdental Toothbrushes

Dental helpline for Hertfordshire

Patients in Hertfordshire will now be able to find the nearest practice offering NHS dental appointments by ringing a new dental helpline.

Hertfordshire’s primary care trusts has set up the helpline to help patients who have been having problems making an appointment with an NHS dentist.

The county’s dental chief Jane Robinson said: ‘It’s a popular misconception that NHS dental appointments are rare but that is simply not the case.

In Hertfordshire there are 204 dental practices offering approximately 47,000 appointments every month. So there are plenty of appointments out there.

Hertfordshire patients can call 01707 569645 or send an email to dentalappointment@herts-pcts.nhs.uk to find out the practice nearest which offers NHS dental appointments.”