New coalition government warns of spending cuts to NHS

Efficiency savings and pay squeezes in areas of healthcare herald new age of British Government

T
he new coalition government has warned that the NHS will be hit by efficiency savings and pay squeezes.

The new Secretary of State for Health, Andrew Lansley (Conservative, pictured), told the BBC’s Today Programme that the service would not be saved from the same kind of efficiency savings and pay squeezes that will hit right across the public sector in a bid to claw back cash.

Mr Lansley is the MP for South Cambridgeshire and previously served as the Shadow Health Secretary, a position he held from 2005.

On being appointed, he said: “It is an immense privilege to be appointed Secretary of State for Health in the new Government.

“Just as Britain needs strong and stable Government, so we intend to bring to the NHS the consistent, stable reform, which enables it to deliver improving quality of care to patients.

“I am determined that we will have an NHS in which the patient shares in making decisions; where quality standards are evidence-based and form the basis of the design of services and their management; and where the objective is consistent improvement in the outcomes we achieve, so that they are amongst the best in the world.”

However he added: “To achieve this in the current financial crisis requires leadership and highly effective management. The NHS will be backed with increased financial resources but with this comes a real responsibility. We will need progressively to cut the costs of what we do now, to innovate and re-design, in order to enable us to meet increased demand and to improve quality and outcomes.”

As Shadow Health Secretary, Mr Lansley attacked the ‘terrible dental legacy’ of Labour and warned that it would be ‘difficult to fix’.

Before the election, the Conservatives promised to tie taxpay-er-trained dentists into the NHS for five years, allow dentists to fine people who consistently miss appointments and give every five-year-old a dental check-up.

“It costs the NHS around £170,000 to train a dentist, but many feel forced to abandon the service for the private sector – or in some cases are actually being poached – at no cost to private firms. We propose that those who take public burndaries for dental training should do at least five years work for the NHS in return,” said their manifesto.

The Tories also pledged to reduce the frequency of routine check-ups NHS dentists would also be rewarded for preventative work.

The other part of the coalition government, the Liberal Democrats, didn’t even mention NHS dentistry in its election manifesto.

When Dental Tribune went to press, the Department of Health had just announced the appointments to the Government’s ministerial health team. Paul Burstow, Liberal Democrat MP for Sutton and Cheam and Simon Burns, Conservative MP for west Chelmsford, have both been selected to serve as ministers of state for health in the new coalition Government.

Former nurse, MP Anne Milton (Conservative) and Earl Howe, an elected hereditary peer have both been made parliamentary under secretaries of state.

Dental abseiling for charity

A dentist and a dental nurse are about to down the tallest hospital tower in the world for charity. Bob Miller and Lesley Dixon from Brent-Vale Dental Practice in Cambridgeshire are abseiling down Guy’s Hospital Tower in London on 12 June to raise money for three charities. Marie Cancer Care, the Myasthenia Gravis Association (for people with a muscle-wasting disease) and Bridge2Aid, a dental charity in Tanzania. Then on 20 June, the whole practice is entering the Dragon Boat Race as the ‘Mental Dental’ team, in Peterborough, to raise funds for the ‘East Anglia’s Children’s Hospice’.

Recommendations pay

The Review Body for Doctors’ and Dentists’ Remuneration (RBDDB) has announced the dates of its visits to dental practices in preparation for making its recommendation for dentists’ pay in 2011-12. They are NHS Berkshire West, 20 May, NHS Brightton and Hove, 4 June; Darlington PCT, 11 June; and Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, 22 June. Any NHS dentist can contact their local PCT/LLHB and request to be part of the group meeting the RBDDB. At this meeting dentists will be able to put forward your views on NHS pay.

Annual study day

The National Oral Health Promotion Group (NOHPG) Annual Study Day will be held on Friday 11 June at the Bristol Dental Hospital, 22 June, any NHS dentist can contact their local PCT/LLHB and request to be part of the group meeting the RBDDR. At this meeting dentists will be able to put forward your views on NHS pay.

Resuscitation app

Dentists, doctors and nurses with iPhones are being urged to download the iResus app which gives the latest resuscitation guidelines. iResus is provided free of charge by the Resuscitation Council (UK) to provide its most up to date guidance for medical professionals providing emergency care in a hospital environment and those with an interest in first aid, iResus is free to download and is available on the iPhone App Store.

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