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Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AM  
First Minister/Prif Weinidog Cymru



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff CF99 1NA  
Bae Caerdydd  
Caerdydd CF99 1NA  
Tel/Ffôn: 029 2082 5111  
Fax/Ffacs: 029 2089 8198  
Email/Ebost: [rhodri.morgan@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:rhodri.morgan@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

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Nicholas Bourne AM  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

| April 2004

*Dear Nick*

I agreed, during plenary on 9 March to write to you about the supply of and demand for intensive care beds in Wales.

The Emergency Pressures Taskforce in 2000 identified the need for an increase in adult Intensive Therapy Unit (ITU) beds in Wales. Whilst there has been an increase in adult general High Dependency Unit (HDU) and ITU beds since then, however, it does not yet match the level of increase recommended.

The Taskforce recommended an initial increase of 30 ITU beds with a recommendation that further provision was looked at. Funding was provided to the then Health Authorities to cover all of the Taskforce's recommendations, not just for ITU beds. It was the Health Authorities' responsibility to prioritise the allocation of resources, although some recommendations were afforded higher priority than others. Since 2000 there has, however, been an increase of 6 general adult resourced HDU beds (from 60 to 66) and an increase of 9 similar ITU beds in the same period (from 93 to 102).

In order to make further progress, we have set targets for the NHS for the coming year, linked to a reduction in the number of operations cancelled as a result of the lack of adult critical care beds and to the inappropriate transfer of patients requiring critical care. Where Regional Offices have been made aware of specific problems, they are working with Trusts and Local Health Boards to overcome them.

In the longer term, we are addressing the issues affecting critical care, such as capacity, through a multi-disciplinary development group the Minister for Health and Social Services has established. This group has already formulated proposed standards of care for



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

differing levels of adult critical care, which have been consulted upon and welcomed by the NHS. The group has now turned its attention to addressing the implementation of these and is due to consult upon plans for this later this year.

I understand that Jane Hutt met with representatives of the Welsh Intensive Care Society before Christmas to discuss these issues.

I trust that this information is useful to you.

Yours

Rhodri