



NATIONWIDE CASUALTY WATCH 2002 - MONDAY 20TH MAY 2002

Press information for Community Health Councils

Dear Chief Officer,

I understand you are taking part in Nationwide Casualty Watch 2002.

I will be handling the national press and media launch. We would like you to publicise the results in the press and media in your area.

This pack outlines the national media strategy for the event, how you can help with the national coverage as well as background information and a draft news release that you may wish to adapt for your own use. **Please note that we will be operating a press embargo until Tuesday 28th May. This means that the media can have the story but they cannot use it until Tuesday 28th May. This enables us to ensure that all the data released to the media is verified; it also means that we can maximise media impact.**

This is a fantastic opportunity to gain national and local publicity for the issue and to raise the profile of the work of CHCs in England and Wales at a crucial time for the organisation. In particular Casualty Watch is an excellent example of the kind work that it would be impossible for the new system to conduct - without the crucial additional element of a community-led local watchdog, such as a CHC or Patients' Council.

In this pack

- How you can help
- Fax back form
- Sample diary notice for local press 1

We will also be supplying you with a short Q&A and further information before Monday.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss how best to work with your local press and media please contact me on 0207 609 8405 or email me at murray.benham@achcew.org.uk.

Yours faithfully

Murray Benham
Media Manager

HOW YOU CAN HELP

National coverage

ACHCEW will be concentrating on presenting a national story to the press. But to do this we need to be able to call on individual CHCs to help.

We need details of local **CHC representatives who are willing to talk to the press**. If you can help, if possible, please include out of hours phone numbers - journalists don't work nine to five.

We also need to know **which hospitals are prepared to let journalists in to their A&E department** when Casualty Watch takes place. If your local A&E has a positive story to tell, this could be their opportunity.

Please complete the attached form and fax **as soon as possible** to Murray Benham at ACHCEW on 0207 700 1152

NATIONWIDE CASUALTY WATCH 2002 - PRESS COVERAGE

FAX BACK by: Monday 20th May 2002

England and Wales - 0207 700 1152

1. The following are prepared to speak to the press:

CHC:.....

▪ Name and position:.....

Phone (work)..... (home/mobile).....

▪ Name and position:.....

Phone (work)..... (home/mobile).....

2. The following hospital(s) will assist with press coverage:

▪ Name of hospital:.....

Address:.....

Contact name and job title:.....Phone:

▪ Name of hospital:.....

Address:.....

Contact name and job title:.....Phone:

3. The following hospital staff (consultant, nurses, managers) may be prepared to talk to the press.

▪ Name and title:.....

Phone:.....

▪ Name and title:.....

Phone:.....

▪ Name and title:.....

Phone:.....

BACKGROUND

Local coverage

We will not be able to deal with inquiries about an individual hospital's performance because of the large amount of data being collated here. Local media coverage and local press enquiries will be up to you.

You may want to use the enclosed draft diary notice to alert your local press to the event. It would be a good idea to send this out immediately. You will receive a copy of the National Press release on Monday 27th May.

Hospital security

Please be aware that hospitals will not allow press, photographers or camera crews into their building without permission. Any journalists wanting to attend the unit during Casualty Watch should be advised to contact the hospital's press officer first.

Confidentiality

The data you collect will not reveal the patient's identity. But if a journalist attending Casualty Watch wants to talk to that patient, it is up to the patient to decide whether to do so, or not.

You should not approach or question patients during Casualty Watch. But, if a patient approaches you saying they would talk to the press about their experiences, do make a note of their name and home phone number. As long as the patient wants to talk, there is no problem doing this.

Before Casualty Watch

Be prepared to talk in advance of the release of the survey results about the general issues concerning your CHC. Maybe someone has already complained to you about a long wait or a cancelled operation. Or you know beds have been closed, causing the problem. Or, perhaps, there has been significant investment in your local A&E resulting in shorter waits and improved quality of care.

Publication of results

National: We aim to issue a list of the longest waits around the country to the media on Monday 27th May, embargoed until Tuesday 28th May 2002.

Local: I would suggest you have your own figures prepared for the local press by Monday 27th May. **It is important that these figures are also embargoed until Tuesday.** If possible, give names of patients prepared to talk to the press. Also a lot of weekly local papers go to press on Wednesday, so they will want the figures urgently. **NB. The local press & radio should be given the figures on Monday 27th May - embargoed until Tuesday 28th May.**

Case studies and the impact of last year's Casualty Watch

To support our press work nationally we are looking for patients who are prepared to talk to the media about their experiences of A&E whether good or bad

We are also looking for examples where, as a result of last year's Casualty Watch there have been improvements in A&E departments or where problems were highlighted and no improvements have been made.

If you can help please contact Murray Benham at ACHCEW on 0207 609 8405.

What next?

Between now and 27th May you will receive further briefings and draft information for Nationwide Casualty Watch 2002. These will include:

- Background notes on answering press enquiries
- A copy of the national media release

GOOD LUCK AND THANKS FOR TAKING PART

DIARY NOTICE

You may like to adapt this and send to your local media immediately to give them notice of Casualty Watch. Substitute the sections in brackets with your own information.

Notes

- Send this by post or fax to your local daily newspapers, weekly newspapers (including free sheets), local radio stations and regional TV news programmes.
- **Send it to named contacts where possible.**
- Follow up with a telephone call. **Be prepared to discuss other aspects of your CHC or Health Council's work with the media.**

Sample Diary Notice:

(Today's date)

For the attention of the news editor/health editor *(or named contact)*

DIARY NOTICE : MONDAY 20th MAY

NATIONWIDE CASUALTY WATCH 2002

Survey of waiting times in hospital accident and emergency departments

Threatened local health Watchdog *(Name of CHC)* will be taking part in a national survey of how long people wait in accident and emergency departments on Monday 20th May 2002.

The snapshot survey will be carried out at 4.30pm and initial results for *(hospitals in this area or name of hospitals as appropriate)* should be available by Monday 27th May. **NB. All results will be strictly embargoed until Tuesday 28th May.**

(Name of spokesperson and position) of *(name of CHC)* said: "Casualty Watch is an excellent example of the great work that CHCs do. Over the years Nationwide Casualty Watch has highlighted major problems in A&E departments across the country. Without a local patient watchdog there is a real danger that these problems would never be brought to light."

(You could use this quote or something more pertinent to your local area)

The survey is organised nationally by the Association of Community Health Councils for England and Wales (ACHCEW).

ENDS

Editors Notes

For further information about the local survey contact **(Name and job title)** on **(CHC telephone number)** (daytime) or **(home telephone number or mobile if possible)** (eve).

For further information about the national survey contact Murray Benham, Press Officer, ACHCEW on 0207 609 8138.