



ASSOCIATION OF  
**COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCILS**  
FOR ENGLAND & WALES

17 January 2000

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**DIARY NOTICE: MONDAY 31 JANUARY**

## **NATIONWIDE CASUALTY WATCH 2000**

### **National survey of waiting times in hospital A&E departments**

The Association of Community Health Councils for England and Wales' (ACHCEW) annual survey of how long people wait for treatment in accident and emergency departments takes place at 4.30pm on Monday 31 January.

This survey provides a unique national snapshot of A&E unit waiting times. For the first time in its three year history England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales will all be included.

Volunteers from over 170 Community Health Councils in England and Wales, Health and Social Services Councils in Northern Ireland and Local Health Councils in Scotland will be visiting A&E departments at 4.30pm and recording how many people are waiting for treatment, how long they have been waiting and whether they are in beds, on trolleys or in chairs.

**Initial results showing the longest waits will be available  
at noon on Tuesday 1 February.**

ACHCEW's director, Donna Covey said: "Many people have been worried by press coverage of the flu outbreak and the impact on intensive care units. When the rest of the health care system overloads, it is A&E that takes the strain. This survey will give a picture of the knock on effects on A&E wards."

Last year's survey revealed:

- an 84 year old man with diarrhoea and vomiting had been waiting over 28 hours for a side room in a ward at a Birmingham hospital
- at a south east London hospital a 79 year old woman with infective diarrhoea had been waiting almost 25 hours
- in a Kent hospital a 33 year old woman with abdominal pain had been waiting almost 24 hours for a bed.

ACHCEW is liaising with the Royal College of Nursing who will be surveying nurses in charge of A&E departments at the same time to gain a better understanding of the causes of and solutions to long waits – these results will be published later in February.

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ACHCEW is the national voice of Community Health Councils (CHCs) representing the interests of the public in the NHS.



“CHC members are volunteers whose role it is to represent the interests of the public to their local health authorities and trusts. This is a very effective way of getting a snapshot view of how services are operating so that we can highlight where things are working well and where serious questions need to be asked.”

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**ENDS**

#### **Editors notes**

1. CONTACT: Helen Eldridge on 0171 609 8138 (direct) 0171 609 8405 (switchboard), 07957 641 852 (mobile), email: helen.eldridge@achcew.org.uk.
2. The Association of Community Health Councils for England and Wales is the national voice of Community Health Councils (CHCs) representing the interests of the public in the NHS.