



Press release

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Tuesday 26th January 1999

HEALTH MINISTER JOHN DENHAM WELCOMES **"CASUALTY WATCH" SURVEY**

Survey shows improvement since last winter and winter money worked well

Minister of State for Health, John Denham, said today:

"Nobody likes to see long waits for treatment, but we are pleased that the Association of Community Health Councils for England and Wales (ACHCEW) themselves say that the situation is much better this winter than last, and that the extra £209 million targeted cash the Government made available for winter pressures has done a good job. This winter, backed up with that cash, the staff of the NHS have worked wonders to cope with unprecedented demands. This endorsement of their efforts by ACHCEW is tribute both to their skill and their sheer hard work.

"ACHCEW say that we need major changes to the way the National Health Service delivers services to patients, to make the system much more moulded to the needs of the patient rather than the other way around. They identify two major areas where progress is planned and which they believe will make a real difference. One is the introduction later this year of better arrangements by the National Health Service for local planning and delivery of local health services. The second is the spread of telephone advice lines in GP surgeries or through schemes like NHS Direct, helping patients make better use of the NHS. We welcome their endorsement of the changes we are introducing."

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