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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board

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Mike Hedges AM
Chair
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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Ein cyf / Our ref: GD/NL/2894/649

Eich cyf / Your ref:

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Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Renné Evans

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Dyddiad / Date: 22nd February 2017

Dear Mr Hedges,

**Re: P-05-732 Unacceptable Waiting Times for NHS patients in A&E
Wrecsam/Wrexham Maelor Hospital**

Thank you for your letter of the 1st February 2017 regarding the Waiting times in the A&E department at Wrexham Maelor Hospital. The Health Board is very aware that, in line with all other Emergency departments in Wales, the waiting times at Wrexham are unacceptably below the 95% target for patients waiting more than 4 hours in the Emergency Department (ED) and we share your concerns.

With reference to the performance in Wrexham in particular, whilst still well below where we would like the performance to be, there has been a steady and continued improvement in the last 6 months. It is worth noting that the performance in January 2017 saw a 10% improvement on the performance for the same month in 2016. However, improvements in the urgent care performance cannot be achieved solely by focusing on the ED itself; any improvements have to be part of the whole Health and Social Care System and we will only succeed by working closely and in partnership with our Community and Local Authority Partners.

A number of factors are contributing to the under achievement of the 95% target in Wrexham, including: challenges with medical and nursing staffing; the acuity of patients (i.e. the number of patients with serious conditions); and the challenges with discharging patients from Hospital in a timely manner (whether due to constraints in community, care home beds or Home Care support available in the Wrexham and Flintshire areas.

The Hospital has been working with colleagues in Community Services and Local Authorities across the region to make the improvements that have been seen and continue to make ongoing improvements. Some of the actions that have been taken and are in planning are:

- Successful recruitment in 2016 to 4 of the 6 Senior Doctor vacancies with further appointments expected to be made in the next 3 months.



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- Successful recruitment in 2016 to the vacant Junior Doctor posts with 2 additional appointments made to temporarily add to the Workforce.
- Improving position in the number of Nurse vacancies filled.
- Development of a Rapid Assessment Unit with the recruitment of an additional Acute Physician (this unit focuses on avoidance of up to 5 admissions a day and reduces attendance of patients with some conditions to ED).
- Weekly full review with Local Authority and Community Teams on patients who have delayed discharges. This has reduced the number of 'Delayed Transfer of Care' patients in both the Acute and Community Hospitals.
- Development of care pathways with Welsh Ambulance Service Trust and Community colleagues to avoid patients being admitted to hospital eg admissions for blocked catheters and patients who have had a fall.
- Development of a communications hub with community colleagues and WAST to support the redirection of G.P. admissions where appropriate as an alternative to admission to Hospital.
- Increase in the District Nursing Service to provide a 24 hour Service and enable more patients to be cared for at home where appropriate.

Whilst we acknowledge that there is much to do, the signs of improvement are encouraging and the work done by the clinical teams, in both the hospital and wider health and social care system, is having a positive effect. The Health Board is committed to maintaining the strong focus on effective care for patients and their families, and we will continue to strive with Local Authority colleagues to further improve performance in the Wrexham Maelor hospital as well as the other sites at Ysbyty Glan Clywd and Ysbyty Gwynedd.

Yours sincerely

Gary Doherty
Prif Weithredwr
Chief Executive

Cc: Nesta Lloyd-Jones, The Welsh NHS Confederation