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Public reminded only go to A&E for serious health emergencies

Posted on Friday 9th January 2015

The NHS in Cumbria is continuing to remind members of the public to use services wisely to help ease pressure on busy hospital teams.

Like hospitals across England, the local NHS is experiencing continued and very heavy demand with large numbers of very poorly patients requiring admission and in need of a longer stay in hospital.

This is impacting on the flow of patients through our hospitals leading to an increase in the time patients are waiting in A&E. Due to pressures on the beds this has resulted in some planned operations being postponed as medical teams concentrate on looking after increased numbers of emergency admissions.

NHS staff are working exceptionally hard to ensure patients remain safe, providing compassionate care around the clock. The public can continue to play their part in helping ease pressures by only attending A&E or using the 999 service for serious health emergencies which include:

- A major accident
- Broken bones
- Breathing problems
- Severe chest pains
- Unconsciousness
- Suspected stroke
- Severe blood loss

If someone has an injury or ailment which is not an emergency they can seek help from their pharmacist, call their GP or visit a local walk-in centre. For out of hours problems that are urgent they can call Cumbria Health on Call (CHoC).

Dr David Rogers, Medical Director for NHS Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "I would like to thank the public for following our advice as despite the severe pressures, a picture is emerging that shows the numbers of people attending A&E has reduced this month particularly in the north of the County and the majority of people attending A&E in Cumbria do genuinely need to be there.

"I want to reemphasise the message asking the public to help ensure that NHS services are available for people who need them most, to think about what other NHS services might be better placed to help them, allowing 999 and A&E to stay free for those in need of emergency care.

"In a lot of cases those with a winter illness won't need to see their GP, attend A&E or call 999. Colds, sore throats, head-aches, hangovers, upset stomachs, coughs, aches, pains, and winter vomiting could all be treated at home with pain killers, rest and plenty of fluids. If you are still concerned then seek the advice of your local pharmacist or call your GP."

On Monday NHS England published national data* detailing all Trust performances against the 95% four hour A&E standard. This data shows Trusts in the North East and Cumbria and many hospitals across the country failed to meet the standard in the last two weeks in December, showing the pressures being faced by the NHS.

Additional capacity has been created in both hospital trusts and partners across health and social care are working together, on a daily basis, to ensure that every effort is made to provide the right care for patients, avoid unnecessary admissions where this is appropriate, and support discharge at the right time.

Gail Naylor, Director of Nursing at North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust said: "We would like to pay tribute to the tremendous efforts of our staff who continue to work tirelessly to treat patients as quickly as possible with a focus on quality and safety at all times. Demand for our services has been unprecedented over the last month, especially over the festive period, and our teams have been a credit to our organisation and the NHS."

Dr Andrew Brittlebank, Medical Director for Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust said: "We would like to remind people that if you have a serious but not life threatening injury you can visit one of our minor injuries units which are based across the county. Our staff are doing a tremendous job in the community to support patients so that they don't need to go into hospital, we are also working closely with the acute trusts and with our social care partners to ensure that people who can be discharged from hospital have the support they need once they leave. It is a testament to the commitment of all the organisations' staff that a joined up approach to these pressures is being delivered. The public can further help by choosing the right service for their conditions."

Dr David Walker, Medical Director, University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust, said: "The safety of everyone who uses our services is our priority and I would like to pay tribute to our staff who continue to work extremely hard to treat and care for our patients in a timely and safe way. We are ensuring that disruption to our non-emergency services is as minimal as possible."

Advice on how to treat a range of common winter conditions by keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home or speaking to your local pharmacist is available at keepcalmthiswinter.org.uk or [@keepcalmne](https://twitter.com/keepcalmne).

ENDS

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Latest news

- **Community Stroke Prevention event in Whitehaven on 14 June**
Monday 10th June 2019
- **Next Governing Body Meeting to take place on Wednesday 5 June 2019**
Wednesday 29th May 2019