

HEALTHIER SCOTLAND

News from the Socialist Health Association Scotland



Welcome to the **December 2013** edition of *Healthier Scotland*, the E-Bulletin of the Socialist Health Association Scotland.

SHA Scotland is a campaigning organisation which promotes health and well-being and the eradication of inequalities through the application of socialist principles to society and government. We believe that these objectives can best be achieved through collective rather than individual action. We campaign for an integrated healthcare system which reduces inequalities in health and is accountable to the communities it serves.

For the latest Scottish health news follow @shascotland on Twitter.

SHA Scotland AGM will be held on Thursday 30 January 2014 at Glasgow City Chambers starting at 7pm. The guest speaker is Neil Findlay MSP, Shadow Health Minister.

Health Inequalities

The latest statistical bulletin on health inequalities shows that for people living in the most deprived communities inequalities in health have never been more apparent. Taskforces and inquiries are no substitute for action.

A new study by NHS Health Scotland has examined 30 years of health trends in Scotland and found large differences in preventable causes of death across social groups. In simple terms the gap between rich and poor is leading to thousands of unnecessary deaths in Scotland.

More than one in four people in the UK have skipped meals, gone without food to feed their family or relied on family or friends to provide food over the past year according to the Trussell Trust.

Dave Watson argues austerity kills and offers some reading to prove it

Sir Harry Burns blames the demise of shipbuilding in the 1970s for the nation's poor health.

Scots living in the poorest parts of the country are more likely to be admitted to intensive care at a younger age than those from more affluent areas.

Mental Health

Prescription of replacement drug therapies including methadone will continue, but options for treatment should be widened out, the Scottish Government has advised. A report, commissioned by the Scottish Drugs Forum (SDF), said services should be able to address the underlying causes of addiction.

The number of GP appointments for depression has halved in the last decade despite a sharp increase in prescriptions for Scots suffering from the illness.

Time to rethink the way we respond to the problem of mental health. Plus a SAMH survey found over four in ten Scots find it difficult to talk about their feelings.

A DRIVE to end discrimination against people with mental health problems in workplaces, schools and hospitals across Scotland has been launched.

NHS Scotland

Health Minister capitulates to health establishment over health board democracy by abandoning direct elections on the flimsiest of evidence.

NHS Scotland is putting sticking plasters on long term funding problems, according to a new Audit Scotland report on NHS finances. The draft Scottish health budget receives a degree of protection, but real term costs are rising faster than the budget allocation.

The US government shutdown was a reminder of the power of the US private health care lobby and why we don't want it here.

Workforce planning is obviously still a struggle for some health boards. Ayrshire and Arran spent £1m on temporary nursing staff in a single year. Doctors overtime costs expensive as well.

Scottish Government sets out its health programme for the coming year. One new Bill and lots of aspirations. Welcome rejection of ConDem health model in England.

Social Care

Demographic change has positive implications for our society and we shouldn't over emphasise the negatives. What we should do is start serious planning. Respecting and developing the workforce is a good place to start.

The Scottish Parliament is having another go at health and care integration with the Public Bodies (Joint Working) Bill. But will this be any more than moving the managerial deck chairs?

Social care experts in Scotland are calling for a more 'honest' debate about the potential cost of looking after the growing elderly population, including the possibility of raising taxes. Unions have argued that we should tackle the 'national disgrace' of elderly care through the Procurement Reform Bill.

Public Health

The affordability of alcohol is linked with persistently high death rates in Scotland, according to NHS Health Scotland's latest research. Three fifths sold below proposed minimum price. A comparison with north-east England also showed that deaths were 67% higher in Scotland while sales were 13% higher.

Two recent health stories highlight the challenge for public health when sensible measures to tackle tobacco and alcohol abuse run up against the commercial interests of big business

Scotland's public health minister launches a scathing attack on tobacco industry tactics as he pledged to press ahead with plain packaging of cigarettes.

Invest in fat-busting now and reap the rewards later.

Healthier Scotland is a Socialist Health Scotland publication

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