



COMMISSION FOR HEALTH IMPROVEMENT
COMISIWN GWELLA IECHYD

Commission for Health Improvement

An introduction

Introduction

The Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) was set up by the Government to improve the quality of patient care in the NHS across England and Wales.

For many years the standard of care offered by the NHS in England and Wales has varied greatly. It varies between hospitals, between departments in the same hospital and between general practices. CHI is one of the Government's reforms to address this variation.

In October 1999, the Prime Minister described CHI as "the boldest step yet" in the Government's programme to modernise the NHS. CHI started work on 1 April 2000 with a programme to make sure that every NHS patient receives the same high level of care. The patient's experience is at the heart of CHI's work.

CHI will monitor and improve the quality of patient care by carrying out clinical governance reviews. CHI will visit every NHS trust and health authority, which includes primary care groups, local health groups and general practices, in England and Wales on a rolling programme. CHI will base its findings on evidence and not opinion.

CHI also investigates serious service failures in the NHS when asked to by the Secretary of State for Health in England and the National Assembly for Wales. It will also carefully consider requests from other people and organisations.

Over time, CHI will develop expertise to help NHS staff and organisations improve their services.

CHI's principles

CHI's commissioners have agreed on six operating principles, CHI will:

- put the patient's experience at the heart of its work
- be independent, rigorous and fair
- use a developmental approach to help the NHS to continuously improve
- base its work on the best available evidence, focusing on improvement
- be open and accessible
- apply the same standards of continuous improvement to itself that it expects of others

What is clinical governance?

This refers to the quality of health care offered within an organisation.

The Department of Health defines clinical governance as a framework through which NHS organisations are accountable for continuously improving the quality of their services and safeguarding high standards of care by creating an environment in which excellence in clinical care will flourish.

In essence, it is about making sure that health services provide patients with high quality and high standards of care.

The challenge

CHI's task is extremely demanding. It has to meet the high expectations of the public and politicians and be accepted as credible and fair within the NHS. It has to balance its review activities with its response to requests for investigations - the 'elective' and 'emergency' elements of its work. CHI will need to forge good working relationships across the NHS and with the public and other organisations.

Studies

CHI monitors how the NHS is meeting recommendations laid down by the National Service Frameworks and the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE). The first study is a review of cancer services which will be published in summer 2001.

Investigations

CHI responds to requests from individuals and organisations which are seriously concerned about the quality of services within an NHS organisation.

You can find out more from CHI's website or in the investigations and inquiries leaflet available from the address on the back of this leaflet.

Leadership

CHI will lead, review and help NHS healthcare to improve by acting as an adviser on 'best practice' and problem solving. As CHI learns from its clinical governance reviews it will be able to spread good practice throughout the NHS.

Leadership of CHI

CHI's management structure comprises the Commission, with 14 commissioners, chaired by Dame Deirdre Hine.

The Commission members are:

Lay members

Janet Beyleveld
 Professor Sir Martin Harris CBE
 Anthony Hewson OBE
 Ann James CBE
 Professor Julian Le Grand
 Melinda Letts
 Nick Partridge OBE
 Museji Takolia

Clinical members

Professor Ian Cameron CBE
 Dr Sam Everington OBE
 Professor David Kerr
 Stephen Moss
 Professor Charles Vincent

CHI's Directors are:

Chief Executive - Peter Homa CBE
 Policy and Development (and Deputy Chief Executive)- Jocelyn Cornwell
 Communications - Matt Tee
 Finance and IT - Steve Hopkins and Mervyn Fermer
 Human Resources - Harry Hayer
 Medical - Dr Linda Patterson MB FRCP OBE
 Operations - Steve Graham OBE
 Nursing - Liz Fradd
 Research and Information - Gwyn Bevan

More information about CHI's Commission Board can be found on CHI's website or in the who's who leaflet available from the address below.

Further information

For further information about CHI please visit our website at www.chi.nhs.uk



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