

NEWS IN BRIEF

Elderly ‘age years in days’ on the wards



Elderly patients stuck in hospital beds age the equivalent of ten years in ten days through inactivity, the new medical director of the NHS has said.

Stephen Powis said that it was essential that the health service built community services to prevent pensioners being kept unnecessarily on wards.

“A person over 80 who spends ten days in hospital loses 10 per cent of muscle mass – equivalent to ten years of ageing,” Professor Powis said.

He added that in order to cope with an ageing population with chronic health problems, the NHS would have fundamentally to rethink the way it provided services. “There are half a million more people aged over 75 than in 2010 and there will be two million more in ten years’ time,” he said. “They are also spending more years in ill health.” Rather than “treating each body part in isolation”, Professor Powis said that services needed to be reformed to fit the needs of the individual.

Writing in The Daily Telegraph, he said that Theresa May’s commitment to increase the long-term funding of the NHS was a step in the right direction but that it must be sufficient to “fix the cracks” in the system, not paper over them.

Andrew Travers, the chief executive of Lambeth Council, warned last month that the health service could plunge into a year-round crisis because of a lack of social care.

In February, Jeremy Hunt, the health secretary, acknowledged that the NHS was experiencing “probably the worst” winter crisis ever “in terms of pressures on the system”.

It is important whatever our age we start to plan for the future. Whether this is considering a Will, Lasting Powers of Attorney, Advance Decision and Advance Statement. Taking such steps are vital to you and your family and friends in trying to ensure your wishes are known and carried out. It is always good to take the first step and talk as to your wishes.

If you would like a free initial consultation to discuss your situation and options open to you then contact me Chris Berry at:

Address: Berrys Solicitors
247 Church Street
Blackpool
FY1 3PE

Phone: 01253 620 022

Email: berrys.mail@btconnect.com

Website: <http://www.berrys-solicitors.co.uk>

Solicitor: Christopher Berry Principal

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