



**TYWYN & DISTRICT HEALTH CARE ACTION GROUP.  
GRWP GWEITHREDU GOFAL IECHYD TYWYN AR CYLCH**

1<sup>st</sup> May 2013

## **Tywyn Memorial Hospital X-ray & Minor Injuries Unit Petition**

### **The reasons for the petition.**

***To call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to stop the withdrawal of X-ray facilities & the reduction in provision of services by the Minor Injuries Unit as a matter of urgency.***

***To enable all interested residents & visitors the opportunity to express their views about the proposed closure of the X-ray unit & the reduction of staff & hours in the Minor Injuries Unit in Tywyn Memorial Hospital. To make those views available to the National Assembly for Wales, the Welsh Government and the Health Minister.***

***To call upon all authorities to ensure equality of health care provision in our rural mid-Wales area.***

### **Background.**

As a result of considerable concern in the local population about current & future Health Care in the Tywyn & District area, an action group was formed in 2012. We are a non-political group and aim to represent the interests of all age groups in this largely rural area in mid-Wales. Since our formation we have been active in participating in the Betsi Cadwaladr & Hywel Dda Health Board Consultations and expressing the views of the local population to Betsi Cadwaladr CHC, the Minister for Health & Social Services, the Chief Executives of BCUHB & Hywel Dda Health Board.

Although Tywyn & District falls within the BCUHB area, our nearest General Hospital is Bronglais, Aberystwyth (see our map Logo), in the Hywel Dda area, 35 miles & at least one hour travel from Tywyn. Some residents in the surrounding area have to travel even further and the bridge at Machynlleth may be closed through damage or flooding which periodically gives rise to a considerable detour. The "Golden Hour Rule" can probably only be met by paramedics or Air Ambulances.

The locality is very rural and Tywyn Memorial Hospital serves a wide area, not just the town itself but other towns & villages around. There is also a very considerable increase in population in the summer. Many people visit the area in the months April to October and have holiday homes, chalets & caravans locally. The supporters of both the written & online parts of the petition reflect this. Many of the visitors have availed themselves of the local health service provisions and understand it's efficacy & importance in a rural area. Some of them do voluntary work in the area e.g. on the Talyllyn Railway.

Public transport is extremely sparse & reduces year by year with no prospect of improvement.

### **X-ray Unit.**

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board have plans to close the X-ray unit and reduce the staff and hours of availability of the Minor Injuries Unit in Tywyn Memorial Hospital. The Community Health Council has expressed its objection to the plans for South Gwynedd which also affects North Powys & North Ceredigion. We believe that if the plans go ahead the people of South Gwynedd are not being treated on a fair and equal basis with other parts of Wales.

We believe that the statistics used to argue for the closure of the X-ray unit in Tywyn are inaccurate. Target figures have been used which are impossible to meet in a unit which is only open on a few occasions in the week. The argument to use a unit elsewhere (Dolgellau, which is North of Tywyn, whereas our General Hospital is South), which will provide more hours of service does not hold water, unless you have a car available & can drive, because of the distance and lack of public transport. The alternative X-ray services offered involve round trips of 30, 40 & 60 miles (more for people who have to travel to Tywyn in the first place).

Please stop the closure of the X-ray Unit and at least maintain the level of availability.

### **Minor Injuries Unit.**

We object to the available hours for the MIU being reduced which seems to fly in the face of the object of treatment being available nearer to home. It is self-evident that minor injuries occur more frequently than serious injuries or illness & should be dealt with as close as possible to the place where the need arises. Early diagnosis & treatment is the most efficient method & prevents further costly complications arising. The welfare of the patient is important! Travelling to an alternative MIU is difficult in an area with sparse public transport & where older, injured, ailing & frail patients are not able to use their own transport.

We believe that, because of the inadequacy of present out-of-hours GP service, the lack of transport in a very rural area and the distance/time element of getting to an alternative treatment centre, more patients will use the 999 service which will put even more pressure on the Ambulance Service and A & E departments. Diagnosis & most treatment in a locally available MIU with trained staff is surely preferable and less costly.

The Minor Injuries Unit, however, is even now being dismantled, in spite of the fact that the Community Health Council has objected to the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board plans for the South Gwynedd area and in particular Tywyn. This gives great concern since well trained & skilled staff are being lost to the unit and with the staff being reduced to two we are concerned how they will provide a service to patients and cover for staff illness & holidays. The team who have trained & worked well together for some years will no doubt be very demoralised. They have developed the ability to assess, diagnose, treat or refer patients speedily but with reductions of staff & hours of availability their effectiveness will be reduced.

Please at least maintain the staff level & hours of availability for the Minor Injuries Unit.

### **Tywyn Memorial Hospital**

There are proposals for the development of Tywyn Hospital site as an integrated primary care resource centre. BCUHB is awaiting a decision on the business case from the Welsh Government which they say they expect in early 2013 but there is no date as yet for implementation. The original building design included an X-ray Department. In the light of such a development, where is the logic in closing the X-ray Unit & running down the MIU now?

Brian Mintoft  
Secretary T&CHCAG.

