



CRC 13 /08

Monday 24 November 2008

CRC Chairman and Chief Dental Officer come to Devon to showcase rural dental services

The Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) in partnership with the Department of Health is today (Monday November 24, 2008) and tomorrow (Tuesday November 25, 2008) staging a special dental 'show and tell' event in Devon. The event, organised by Primary Care Contracting, is a unique opportunity to share innovative practice amongst Primary Care Trusts concerned about improving quality and access to NHS dental services in rural areas. National Health Service staff and people from around the country working in health and social care in the public sector have been invited to join the event.

Speaking ahead of the event, Dr. Stuart Burgess Chairman of the CRC and the Government's Rural Advocate said: "I am pleased to have the opportunity to be in North Devon to introduce the programme of visits to local dental practices over the next couple of days. Devon PCT has been especially proactive in commissioning local services to help address difficulties in meeting demand for NHS dentists. Dental practices in Torrington and Chumleigh are shining examples of how local commissioning has been used to address inequality in oral health provision in rural areas, and involving patients in shaping access to and delivery of services.

"I am especially delighted to be joined by Barry Cockcroft the Chief Dental Officer, and colleagues from the British Dental Association who we have been working with us to identify issues of concern amongst rural dentists and to learn about interesting and innovative approaches to the provision of NHS dental services in rural areas."

Barry Cockcroft, said: "I commend Devon PCT's initiative and the work that had been done across the county to improve access to NHS dentistry. This is a good example of how both access to dentistry and variations in dental health across rural areas of the South West can be improved. It is also very good to see that in the recently published vision for the future of health services in the South West, the Strategic Health Authority has made improving access to NHS dental services a priority."

Graham Russell CRC's Director of Practice who is hosting the visit said: "Over the two days, delegates will have the opportunity to hear from healthcare practitioners from the Devon, and Cornwall and Isle of Scilly Primary Care Trusts, as well as visiting local dental practices in North Devon. I am particularly pleased to have this opportunity to meet PCT commissioners and public health professionals from rural areas around the country. The exchange of experience amongst professionals involved directly in the commissioning and delivery will be of immense value in sharing best practice and, ultimately, meeting the needs of people living in rural communities throughout England."

ENDS

For further information contact Chris Wynne-Davies on 01242 534070

Notes for editors:

1 The itinerary for the visit can be found at:

<http://www.pcc.nhs.uk/events/all/911>

2 Case studies from the South West illustrating the issues faced in providing dental services in rural areas can be found at:

www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/devon%20pct%20case%20study.pdf

www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/torrington%20local%20commissioning.pdf

www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/engaging%20patients%20to%20shape%20delivery.pdf

3 The CRC was established in April 2005 and became an independent body on 1 October 2006, following the enactment of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006. The role of the CRC is to provide well-informed, independent advice to Government and ensure that policies reflect the real needs and circumstances of people living and working in rural England. We give particular focus to tackling disadvantage and economic under-performance.

We have three key functions:

- advocate: the voice for rural people, business and communities;
- expert adviser: providing evidence-based, objective advice to Government and others;
and
- independent watchdog: monitoring and reporting on the delivery of policies nationally, regionally and locally.

Further information about the CRC and its work can be found at:

www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk