

Public Health England

Friday message



Duncan Selbie
Chief Executive Designate

21 September 2012

Dear everyone

The next wave of our dementia behaviour change campaign, which will run until January, starts today and will be widely featured on television, in the press and social media. Our aim is to increase early diagnosis of dementia by alerting people to its signs and symptoms as well as encouraging them to discuss any concerns with their GP. The campaign is a key element of the National Dementia Strategy and is supported by the Alzheimer's Society. Critical to the success of the campaign will be securing the support of healthcare professionals who together will create a network of champions to influence changes in attitude and behaviour around dementia.

I recently met Deborah Arnott, Chief Executive of Action on Smoking on Health and other colleagues in the field who lead a coalition of 190 organisations in the UK working to reduce levels of smoking. Smoking is the major cause of preventable deaths in England and it hits the poorest in society hardest. Tackling this will be a priority for Public Health England. Tobacco control gives local government one of its most powerful opportunities to transform the public's health and combined with the Government's national plan and the robust Public Health Guidance produced by NICE we have an exceptional opportunity to make a further step difference in helping people become "smoke free". We will do all we can to support this movement and I am delighted that councils, charities and professional bodies are coming together to address this challenge in their local communities. To find out more visit www.ash.org.uk/clear.

Excitement is growing across the public health system at the prospect of being able to tap into Public Health England's extensive knowledge base. This will include surveillance, which we are extending and improving all the time (for example the additional surveillance systems developed for the Olympics through Emergency Departments and GP out of hours systems is to be continued, evaluated and further developed). There is also a clear opportunity to develop some of the best surveillance systems in the world in areas such as cancer and congenital anomalies, by building on the excellent work being done already across the country. PHE will be promoting a new national surveillance strategy to ensure we react quickly to unexpected trends in health and health risk wherever they may occur.

Investing in leadership will be one of our critical national contributions. For example, we are supporting the move of public health into local government by endorsing a new leadership programme, 'Leading through Transition'. It is aimed at Directors of Public Health, Directors of Adult Social Services and Directors of Children's Services to help strengthen these crucial relationships and how they identify together the main public health concerns in their local communities. (More information is available from transition@frontlinemc.com).

I am pleased to say that Dr Charles Alessi, Chairman, National Association of Primary Care and Interim Chairman, NHS Clinical Commissioners will be helping us as a Senior Adviser on population health. His vision and expertise will be a further superb asset in our work to improve public health outcomes for the poorest and most poorly.

With best wishes

