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NHS' annual scramble to avert winter crisis

NHS为避免冬季危机的年度抢救

T he NHS is facing its toughest ever winter. There are fears that trusts may be forced to use beds in private nursing homes, reopen wards that have been disused and create new ones to enhance capacity. Trusts are attempting to recruit nurses from abroad to address staff shortages in a bid to cope with the expected impact of flu, norovirus and predicted bad weather. The NHS has allegedly 'pulled out all the stops', taking unprecedented steps to prepare for winter in an effort to avoid a crisis.

英国国民医疗服务体系正面临有史以来最严峻的冬季。恐怕一些信托基金会被迫使用私人养老院的床位，重新开放长期废弃的病房并新建一些以增强承载能力。为了应对预期的流感、诺如病毒和不利天气带来的影响，信托基金会正试图从国外招募护士以解决人手短缺的问题。据称，英国国民医疗服务体系已经“千方百计”，采取了前所未有的措施，在努力减少危机方面迈出了重要的一步。

As the winter bed crisis hits health and social services up and down the UK, they are starting feel the strain. So too are the people who use these services and the staff who work within them. Once again, accident and emergency departments are facing demanding workloads over the winter period, made worse by limited human and material resources along with acute funding pressures.

随着冬季床位危机袭击英国的医疗和社会服务，它们开始感受到压力。使用这些服务的人以及工作人员也同样感受到了压力。一次又一次，急诊部门在冬季期间面临着繁重的工作量，加之有限的人力和物力资源以及严重的资金压力，情况变得更加糟糕。

A Commons Health Committee alerted that accident and emergency departments in England are in the process of reaching 'crisis point' that can only be averted with urgent action. The Royal College of Nursing has described accident and emergency departments as 'dangerously overburdened'. In the 6 months to the end of October 87 186 NHS patients were waiting in departments on trolleys for 4-12 hours. This is an increase of approximately 40 000 on the previous period of 2011 (McSmith, 2013) and we have not yet even seen the busiest period in accident and emergency departments.

一项由英国下议院卫生委员会发布的警告称，急诊科正在达到“危机点”，只有紧急采取行动才能避免。英国皇家护理学院称急诊科过度负担，危险突显。在截至10月底的6个月内，共有87,186名NHS患者在急诊科等待4至12个小时。这个数字比2011年同期增加了约40,000人次 ( McSmith, 2013 ) ，而且忙碌的急诊科期尚未到来。

Governments (both current and previous) are acting too late, putting in place short-term resources for something that we know will come around every winter, just as sure as Christmas Day falls on 25 December. Short-term attempts to address this perennial problem will only tide us over. A sustainable and proactive solution is required.

政府（包括现任和前任）采取行动太晚了，在每年冬季像圣诞节一样准确到来的问题上只提供短期资源。短视的尝试只能维持我们短期的需要，需要可持续和主动的解决方案。

Government rhetoric claiming that new money, £250 million, is being spent on attending to the winter pressures this year is being questioned by the British Medical Association (BMA) (2013). Sprinks (2013) reports that £500 million is being made available to ease winter pressures. The BMA (2013) suggests that this so-called extra cash being pumped into the NHS for additional staff along with extra beds to help the service get over the winter challenges is not new money at all, it is money that has been taken from one part of the NHS and given to another-a case of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

政府声称今年新的资金2.5亿英镑用于应对冬季压力的说辞已被英国医学协会(BMA) (2013)质疑。Sprinks(2013)报道称，5亿英镑将用于缓解冬季压力。BMA(2013)建议，这所谓的额外资金用于为医疗服务增加员工和床位以应对冬季挑战的说法并非新资金，而是从NHS的某个部分拨出的资金转移到了另一个部分，这是把彼得抢来付保罗的情况。

The Health Minister has announced that the money will be spent on 2500 extra beds and the equivalent of around 3000 extra staff engaged to help the English NHS manage this winter (Department of Health (DH), 2013). There will be 320 doctors and nearly 2000 nurses, physiotherapists, social workers and other staff posts deployed across the country ahead of the traditionally busy winter period. I am wondering where the new nurses are going to come from. We struggle to recruit at the best of times let alone during the worst times. Punishing workloads, reduced resources and extreme pressure make an unsustainable work environment for a number of nurses and other staff, not to mention the effects on service users.

卫生部长宣布将用2500张额外床位的资金配备约3000名额外员工，以帮助英国国家医疗服务体系管理即将到来的冬季（卫生部（DH），2013年）。在传统繁忙的冬季期间，将在全国范围内部署320名医生和近2000名护士、物理治疗师、社会工作者和其他员工职位。我想知道新的护士将从何处招募。我们在最好的时候都很难招募到人，更不用说在最糟糕的时候了。沉重的工作负担、减少的资源和极大的压力给许多护士和其他员工带来了一个难以维持的工作环境，更不用说对服务用户的影响了。

According to the DH ( 2013), there will be an increase in temporary staff, an extension to the hours of present staff and the creation of some new positions-a reactive response, not a proactive one. How can the NHS continue to meet rising demand (felt even more acutely during the winter months) when the Government is taking £20 billion out of the budget? The so-called new money is being syphoned from elsewhere within the system.

根据 2013 年 DH 的报告，将会有一些新的职位被创造，现有员工的工作时间会被延长，并且暂时性员工的数量也会增加。这是一种被动应对，而不是积极应对。当政府正在从预算中削减 200 亿英镑时，NHS 如何才能继续满足不断增长的需求（特别是在冬季更加明显）？所谓的新增资金实际上是从系统内其他地方流转而来。

Any extra support to relieve the exhausting conditions patients and staff experience during the winter months should be welcomed, of course. But this is, yet again, a case of too little too late. It is a coping mechanism, rather than a solution. It is high time that the Government dealt with this issue of winter crisis in a more organised and sustainable manner, listening to those on the front line. Otherwise, winter will turn up again next year and we will be having the same discussion about how we are injecting cash into the system to deal with the anticipated crisis. Expecting nurses to put in that little extra during the winter months, yet again, might just be the straw that breaks the camel's back. There is an urgent need to look at long-term funding and the recruitment issues facing the NHS, and to address the pressures nurses feel on a daily basis, year in year out,-not just during winter months.

当然，任何额外的支持来缓解患者和工作人员在冬季经历的劳累条件都应该受到欢迎。但是，这又是一个来得太迟的案例。这只是一种应付机制，而不是解决方案。政府早就应该以更有组织和可持续的方式处理这个冬季危机问题，倾听前线的意见。否则，冬天明年还会再次到来，我们将再次讨论如何向系统注入资金来应对预期的危机。再次期望护士在冬季投入那点额外的努力，可能会压垮骆驼的最后一根稻草。迫切需要审视长期的资金和英国国民保健制度所面临的招聘问题，并解决护士每天面临的压力，每年都如此-而不仅仅是在冬季。

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