

10<sup>th</sup> August 2017

## **IMPROVEMENTS IN HEART FAILURE SERVICES WELCOME, BUT REGIONAL VARIATION MUST BE ADDRESSED**

August 2017: The Alliance for Heart Failure welcomes the improvements in heart failure services, as reported in the latest National Heart Failure Audit, but calls for much more to be done to address the vast regional variation in patient outcomes.

The audit, published on August 10, 2017, reported that mortality among patients admitted to hospital has fallen significantly to 8.9% compared to 9.6% last year; that the number of patients seen by specialist heart failure nurses remains high at 80 per cent; and that 90 per cent of patients are recorded as having an up to date echocardiogram. The report also recorded an increase in prescriptions for disease modifying medications.

Professor Andrew Clark, co-chair of the Alliance for Heart Failure, said:

*“These latest data are cause for cautious celebration. They suggest we are taking positive steps towards our goal of improving diagnosis and treatment for heart failure patients. We applaud the huge efforts made by the staff who enter the data into the National Heart Failure audit, who often go unthanked. Their hard work makes a huge contribution to driving up standards of care throughout the NHS.*

*“However, our analysis of services and patient outcomes at a regional level tells us that there is still a great deal to be done to ensure that people receive a consistent service wherever they are in the country. For example, patient mortality and rates of implantation of cardiac resynchronization therapy devices vary significantly from region to region.*

*“While we should welcome the findings of the latest audit, we must continue to strive for even greater improvement across the board.”*

In 2016, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Heart Disease published a set of ten recommendations for improving heart failure services in its 'Living with Heart Failure' report. At the time of its publication the Alliance for Heart Failure called upon NHS England, Health Education England, Clinical Commissioning Groups, and NHS Improvement to adopt these proposals and remains determined to bring about further change, in particular in regions that are underperforming against the national average.

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## **Notes to editors**

### **About Heart Failure**

Heart failure is debilitating and life threatening. Outcomes are poor: five-year survival rate for heart failure is worse than breast or prostate cancer.<sup>1</sup> Heart failure represents a major and growing cost to the NHS and wider society. It is a leading cause of hospital admission in over 65s<sup>2</sup> and is one of the five long-term conditions responsible for 75% of unplanned hospital admissions.<sup>3</sup>

### **About the Alliance for Heart Failure**

The Alliance for Heart Failure is a coalition of charities, patient groups, professional bodies and healthcare companies for the purpose of raising the profile of heart failure in Government, the NHS and the media. Its mission is to achieve better outcomes for people with heart failure by ensuring every person with heart failure is diagnosed on time and has access to the right care and support.

The Alliance is supported and funded by Bayer, Medtronic Limited, Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd, and Roche Diagnostics Ltd. The Alliance was established in September 2015; the inaugural meeting was initiated by Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd with funding provided by Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd, and Medtronic Limited.

### **Alliance for Heart Failure member organisations**

Bayer; British Association for Nursing in Cardiovascular Care; British Society for Echocardiography; British Society for Heart Failure; Cardiomyopathy UK; Cardiovascular Care Partnerships; Kent Surrey Sussex Academic Health Science Network; Medtronic UK; National Heart & Lung Institute; Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd; Pumping Marvellous Foundation; Roche Diagnostics Ltd; South East Clinical Networks

Members represent charities, patient groups, professional bodies and corporate members with an interest in heart failure. Membership is also open to charities and public sector organisations.

### **Co-Chairs (12 month tenure)**

Angela Graves (Pumping Marvellous Foundation)  
Professor Andrew Clark (British Society for Heart Failure)

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<sup>1</sup> Askoxylakis, V. et al. *Long-term survival of cancer patients compared to heart failure and stroke: A systematic review*. BMC Cancer. 2010. 10:105. Available at: <http://bmccancer.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1471-2407-10-105> [Accessed July 2016]

<sup>2</sup> NICE. *Acute heart failure: diagnosing and managing acute heart failure in adults*. October 2014. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg187> [Accessed July 2016]

<sup>3</sup> NHS England. *Emergency admissions for Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions – characteristics and trends at national level*. March 2014. Available at: <http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/red-acsc-em-admissions-2.pdf> [Accessed July 2016]