MEDIA RELEASE

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Press release - #StayWellSwessex tweetathon – a success!

A Twitter campaign to share information about how to stay well during winter and where to go for health and care support was a huge success just before Christmas with results showing messages reached almost 250,000 twitter accounts.

The #StayWellSwessex tweetathon, which took place on Tuesday 22 December 2015, was organised to support the national NHS winter health campaign ‘Stay Well This Winter’ which encourages people, particularly those in ‘at risk’ groups to have the flu jab and to take steps to keep well during the colder weather. The tweetathon saw active participation from NHS organisations including Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Basildon and Brentwood CCG, Basildon Hospital, NELFT as well as Essex and Thurrock councils, health and care
partners and providers, fire and police services, voluntary organisations, and local newspapers and residents.

Throughout the day, more than 420 tweets were sent and retweeted using the #StayWellSwessex hashtag. With some participants twitter accounts having more than 100,000 followers, results show that the ‘Stay Well’ messages and the #StayWellSwessex hashtag potentially reached more than a million twitter accounts.

Mandy Ansell, (Acting) Interim Accountable Officer, NHS Thurrock CCG, said: “A big thank you to everyone who took part in the #StayWellSwessex tweetathon. We recognised the impact that social media can have, but these results exceeded our expectations. The participation from so many of our partners, providers and members of the public in one campaign was a first for us across the south west Essex area. We are thrilled with the level of support and commitment on the day from everyone who was involved.”

Homesteads Councillor and Conservative Health Spokesman, Cllr James Halden also took part in the tweetathon. He said: “Activities like this serve to remind us that the holidays are such a busy time for many, that it's easy to overlook things that we take for granted during normal business times such as access to medical care, pharmacies and so on. I congratulate partners in the Thurrock Health scene on such a successful event and I look forward to taking part in them in the future.”

John Leslie, Interim Chief Officer, NHS Basildon and Brentwood CCG, said: “The #StayWellSwessex Tweetathon was a great opportunity to share with the public a day in the life of health services and our winter health advice. As one of the Tweetathon partners we would like to thank all our Twitter followers for retweeting messages which gave a real insight into the pressures faced locally, particularly in urgent and emergency care services.

“We urge people to think very carefully before attending A&E. You may receive the care you need more appropriately and in a more timely fashion if you access other health services. If you are not sure where to go, simply dial NHS 111.”

The ‘Stay Well’ winter campaign continues and health and care partners will individually be supporting residents to stay well this winter through information in the media and on their websites and twitter.

ENDS

Notes to editors

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