

WORCESTERSHIRE LMC LTD

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2007 EDITION

WHAT WILL THE NEW YEAR BRING FOR GENERAL PRACTICE?

The end of one year and the start of another is always the time for reflection and imagining what the New Year will bring. Unfortunately the vibes for the coming year are far from good for General Practice. On the 20th December we sent out to all practices a copy of a letter from Dr Laurence Buckman outlining the situation with the GMS contract negotiations. It is outrageous that in the middle of the appropriate negotiations on the GMS contract the Government has decided to totally change the direction of the negotiations and force us into extended hours. As you know the GPC is not prepared to accept the offer and the Government has indicated that it will impose changes in the GP contract and has given notice of a 13 week period of consultation of its plans to impose these changes. We will be awaiting further information from the GPC on how the profession is going to respond. The GPC believes there will be a cut in resources of approximately £36,000 per average practice. In the event that there is no agreement between the GPC and NHS Employers on extended opening hours these changes will be imposed from 1st April 2008. If there was any a time when GPs need to be united this is it!

If you didn't think that was bad there was more news on a local issue. All PCT's have been told that by the beginning of 2009 they should have in place an APMS practice, which will not be an existing GP service or Health Centre but entirely new premises, with contracts to be awarded and signed by March 2009. It is assumed that the practices will have an average of approximately 6,000 patients and will have 5-10 hours of extra opening per week at evenings and weekends with GPs; practice nurses and administrative staff. There is a small amount of additional funding to start these up but as always with DOH initiatives once these are up and running the cost of these will be borne by the local health economy! We believe that Worcestershire PCT will have no option but to provide one of these and the likely site of this will be in Worcester City. One of their requirements is it will be located in areas that maximise convenient access for local population especially commuters. What good this is to the health economy in Worcestershire goodness only knows.

It is very sad that the new GP contract was negotiated in good faith by both sides and this Government has totally reneged both on the contract and the thrust of development that went with it. No wonder morale is bad and recruitment and retention are starting to decline. Interestingly that was why the new contract was negotiated in the first place and so it seems to be another Government own goal. The LMC will be watching developments very closely and will be keeping you informed.

PRACTICE BASED COMMISSIONING

As we have already mentioned we believe that unity of the profession is really important at this time. This links into our strongly held view that each significant locality in Worcestershire should come together with regard to Practice Based Commissioning. This has already happened in Wyre Forest and Redditch and Bromsgrove but unfortunately despite the meeting at Upton on Severn and a letter to each practice from the LMC we have only had three responses from practices. We really would encourage doctors in the South of the county to get together in one form or another, if nothing else to protect yourselves from private providers taking services away from you and the encroachment of APMS. As we have already said there is a very strong likelihood of an APMS practice appearing in Worcester City in the not so distant future. The Commissioning and Service Development subcommittee newsletter has been made available. This has been distributed and is on our website.

GP SYSTEMS OF CHOICE

John Thornbury came to the last LMC meeting and talked us through his proposals for GPSoC in the county. He would like all practices to move to GPSoC as soon as possible and will be sending an email out anytime. One of the advantages of doing this is that the maintenance contracts will be held by GPSoC, this will free up significant additional resources for IT in Worcestershire. Practices will have the option to move to any one of the approved GPSoC services. The PCT do not support the idea of hosted systems and are looking to spend development monies on providing all practices with DocMan latest upgrades along with developing electronic pathology services. The Primary Care Working Group has been involved with this and Dr Richard Kinsman is the LMC member on the panel. Label printers are another area that is being dealt with as is updating systems where the memory reaching capacity. If practices believe that their servers are approaching 80% capacity we would suggest contacting the IT department to discuss this with them. Once the memory gets beyond that kind of level practices could head into problems. Raise the issues early don't wait until things are creaking along badly! Connecting for Health will be publishing a draft version of the PCT - Practice Agreement for GPSoC shortly. The link is www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/systemsandservices/gpsupport/gpsoc.

PAY FOR GP REGISTRARS

We understand that there have been some changes to the GP Registrars car allowance. We have had different impressions as to what this actually means. We contacted the GPC office and have been told that the final details have not yet been published. We have also been made aware nationally that GP Registrars payrolls are frequently wrong. We would encourage all practices to check very closely that their registrars are being paid the appropriate amount. As soon as we get the definitive news about the car allowances we will pass that onto you.

WORCESTERSHIRE PCT NEWS

Unfortunately we had anticipated reaching agreement over the new PMS Contracts before Christmas. This has been held up with delays at the PCT solicitors and we

have yet to have the final version of the PCTs proposal for us to view. We hope this will happen early in the New Year.

The PCT has advised us that the National Audit Office is going to start compliance checks as they are concerned that a significant number of practices are not offering the NHS pension where appropriate to staff. Practice Managers ought to review the situation with regard to NHS pensions.

A REGULAR QUERY TO LMCs RELATES TO THE RULES REGARDING THE ISSUE OF MEDICAL CERTIFICATES

Detailed guidance can be found at the following address:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/medical/guides_detailed.asp#IB204

Keep a copy handy in your practice.

MEDICATION IN SCHOOLS

Another regular bugbear for practices is the issue of dispensing medication in schools and nurseries. Some are saying that they can't give simple medication to children without prior agreement. This is nonsense and the OFSTED national standard is as follows:

Medicine (7.8)

You may give children non-prescription medication such as cough preparations, or teething gel but only with the *prior written agreement* of the parent and only when there is a health reason to do so. For all non-prescription medicines, parents should give written consent that specific medication can be administered to their child when required. Written consent should be obtained from parents at the time you start looking after their child and checked at regular intervals so that you take account of any changes, for example where a child can no longer take a certain type of medication or may need an additional medication.

You need to be careful when giving medication to children. Consider:

- finding out when, how much and why a child has had medicine before they come to you;
- recording details of the last dose, for example when it was given and the amount;
- contacting the parent by telephone before you give the child any medicine.
- making sure any medicine has not passed its expiry date;
- storing medicines of minded children and household members safely including cool storage for antibiotics;
- making sure you know about any self-held medication;
- making sure that the use of sun creams, lotions and nappy creams meet the needs and preferences of children and their parents;
- making sure children's individual emergency medication is available at all times.

It is clear that OTC medicines can be given and the relevant institution needs to get

the parents to give written consent to this (and to consent to prescription medicines) and not the doctor.

PCT POLICY ON HPV VACCINE

The LMC wrote to the PCT a little while ago following contact from a number of practices regarding patient pressure to provide the HPV vaccine. You should have all received the PCT's guidance. We have had some criticism of this from GPs but the committee felt that at least the PCT had come off the fence and had given explicit guidance. Practices who refuse to provide HPV vaccine can at least use this as a defence pending the national rollout of the HPV vaccination scheme hopefully later in 2008.

PRACTICE LEGAL FEES INSURANCE

A number of issues have arisen recently that has made the LMC very much aware of the issue of legal protection for claims. We would suggest all practices consider legal insurance that covers income tax investigations and legal protection. Practices could very easily run up huge legal bills dealing with complaints, unrelated to patient care which is therefore not covered by their defence bodies. A number of issues have highlighted to the LMC a need for all practices to have an up to date Practice Agreement, expert accountancy advice, and legal protection insurance. Something for you all to think about!

WORCESTESHIRE ACUTE NHS TRUST FOUNDATION BID

On the 20th December the LMC Secretary attended the presentation at the Acute Trust of their proposals for Foundation Trust Status. Effectively the Trust has been advised that unless it moves to Foundation status over the next 12 months it will cease to exist. In the long run there will be no Acute Trusts and those that do not move to Foundation status will be merged with other organisations. The Trust will be contacting the LMC with further details as the year goes on and will be hoping that a number of GPs will sign up to become members of the Foundation Trust. The long term strategy for the organisation will be to run two District General Hospitals and to enhance DGH type services. Medical emergencies are a priority area for improvements. Other meetings are planned in the New Year and we will keep you informed of all developments.

WORCESTERSHIRE LMC WEBSITE

The following guidance has been added to the LMC website during the last month:

BMA/GPC Guidance:

Commissioning and Service Development subcommittee newsletter - Nov 07

http://www.worcslmc.co.uk/upload/CSD_newsletter_-_Nov07_-_final.pdf

Mental Health Act: Code of Practice

http://www.worcslmc.co.uk/upload/Mental_Health_Act_-_Code_of_Practice_-_Nov_2007.pdf

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**THIS NEWLETTER IS PRODUCED FROM THE LMC OFFICE AT
ST STEPHENS SURGERY**

The next LMC meeting will be 10 January 2008