

Newcastle and North Tyneside LMC

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LMC Newsletter

Autumn 2005

Current Hot Topics

GPC Negotiators Update

LMC officers from the SHA area met with Richard Vautrey from the GPC Negotiating Committee in October. Although much of the current negotiations are still confidential Richard was able to give some hints about changes to our contract for 05/06. He indicated that there would be no new monies in Global Sums or the QOF because of the significant extra investment that the Government has had to make as a consequence of higher QOF achievements. There will be some changes to QOF criteria but nothing too surprising. He indicated that there was a possibility of new money for National DESs to assist with the implementation of Government objectives such as Choose & Book and Practice Based Commissioning. ***The GPC advice for practices in the interim is not to feel pressurised into adopting these initiatives until it is clear that adequate resources have been secured to support them.***

The GPC also expects further guidance on PBC to be issued soon. Much of this information was also given to a meeting for GPs held at the Marriott Hotel the following week at which Andrew Dearden, Chairman of GPC Wales and another member of the GPC Negotiating Team was guest speaker. In an up-beat and amusing presentation Andrew encouraged GPs to be pro-active and bold in grasping the initiative for future Primary Care developments if we

want to avoid the risk of fragmentation and threat from alternative providers.

Choose and Book

The media have been reporting that the C&B programme has been delayed by a year because of IT problems. This is only partially correct. There have indeed been significant IT problems with the initial C&B software not being deemed 'fit for purpose'. However updated versions are being piloted and look more robust. The DOH however, is determined to press ahead with its 'Choice' agenda even if the IT element still needs development. It wants GPs to offer 4 choices of provider for certain services from December 05 and has charged SHAs, and through them PCTs, to seek written confirmation from GPs that they will agree to offer 'Choice' from December. Whilst not opposed to the principle of choice it is the LMC's view that although some practices may decide to become involved in Choose and Book, ***no practice must feel under any obligation or be forced to use it, as at present C&B is not part of a GP's terms and conditions of service.*** GPs should, as at present, continue to offer what they feel is in the best interests of each individual patient.

Acute Trust Matters

There is an ongoing problem with the quality of discharge information from the Acute Trusts. We are also aware of the situation where further tests or follow-up by the GP, are requested by the Hospital Doctor without it being clear what the indications are and whether the patient has been asked to attend the surgery. For some time we have been in discussion with our Acute Trust colleagues to agree an acceptable policy for this process. We hope soon to be able to issue an agreed policy for the Newcastle Acute Trust and reply proforma that Practices can use if the policy is not being followed. We will try to ensure a similar process with Wansbeck.

Avian and Pandemic Flu

The media are in the process of creating widespread panic over the risks posed by H5N1 Avian flu and the possibility of a global pandemic. The LMC has had initial discussions with Dr Vivien Hollyoak, the local Public Health lead on Influenza and will continue to work with the PCTs on developing local contingency plans in the event of a pandemic. Meetings for GPs to discuss

future plans will be forthcoming. One benefit of the media coverage will be the achievement of this years flu vaccine targets!

Target Payments for Childhood Vaccs and Imms

Many of you will be aware of the change to the contract target payments brought about by the introduction of the pentavalent vaccine, which has resulted in the MMR become responsible for 50% of the target payment. The LMC and GPC would like to hear from Practices if they are experiencing significant financial losses as a consequence of these changes.

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