

NEGOTIATORS' REPORT – October GPC

Focus on Extended Access – GPC guidance

Following publication of the Extended Hours Access Scheme DES Directions and SFE, the GPC guidance has now been updated and reissued. An FAQ section has been added to assist practices under pressure from PCOs to move from a LES to the DES arrangements. The guidance is available at the following link -

www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/Focusextendaccess0408

LMC links with RCGP faculties

The RCGP has written to all RCGP local faculties encouraging them to develop local links with LMCs and encouraging them to invite an LMC representative to their Faculty Board meetings. The RCGP is asking faculties for information on what links they currently have with their LMC and asking them to identify an individual lead to link with their LMC. We believe improved links at local level and regular contact between LMCs and faculties would have many benefits both locally and for the BMA and RCGP, particularly with regard to the current Darzi reviews.

Condition Management Programme (CMP) for people in receipt of Incapacity Benefit

A Condition Management Programme (CMP) has been set up in conjunction with the Department for Work and Pensions and Department of Health. This is aimed at those people with long-term health problems who are in receipt of incapacity benefit, with a view to helping them back to work. It uses techniques such as health education, exercise and vocational support.

The GPC has become aware that in some areas the CMP provider or PCO is asking GPs to complete a questionnaire/health report to confirm that certain patients can participate in the scheme. It is the GPC's view that this is not core GP work and therefore GPs are not obliged to undertake this. If such questionnaires/health reports are necessary then they could be provided by an occupational health physician. Alternatively, if GPs wish to complete the report then they may charge a fee or the LMC may wish to negotiate a LES for this work with the PCO.

Publication of QOF figures

The results of the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) for 2007-08 for England and Scotland have been published. The results demonstrate the high standard of treatment patients are receiving across the UK.

In England, practices achieved 96.8% of all targets set out in the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF), part of the new GP contract - an increase of 1.3% on last year. In Scotland, GPs achieved 98.2%. The results for Northern Ireland were published on 19th September and practices achieved 98.9%. Results for Wales have not yet been published.

The BMA press releases can be found at the following link –

www.bma.org.uk/pressrel.nsf/wfmms?OpenForm&Seq=1

The Public Affairs Division has also prepared a briefing paper highlighting the benefits of the QOF which is available on the website at the following link -

www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/QOFbrief0908

Support Your Surgery campaign - Thanks a Million

By now, all GP Practices in England should have received a campaign pack for phase 2 of the Support Your Surgery campaign.

The 1.3 million signatures collected by GPs and LMCs was a phenomenal achievement, and certainly had a big impact on government. But perhaps the greatest success of the campaign was the way it raised public and patient awareness of the problems facing General Practice today, and the high quality service that GP practices provide.

The second phase of the Support Your Surgery campaign continues the focus on raising public awareness of the threats to General Practice, and on letting people know how they can make their voices heard - for example, by writing to their PCT, local MPs, local media, and local council overview and scrutiny committees.

Please could you, as LMCs, keep reminding practices of the importance of keeping the momentum of the Support Your Surgery campaign going - it is vital that practices keep talking to their patients about this, and prominently display posters in their practice. However it is also important not to give any false impression of the danger to local GPs and practices should consider the local context when displaying posters and leaflets.

Additionally, we have received a number of reports from LMCs around the country who have had positive experiences in contacting local overview & scrutiny committees. If you have had either positive or negative experiences contacting your local OSC, please do let us know.

MP-GP matching scheme

The BMA's Parliamentary Unit has written to all Westminster MPs inviting them to visit a GP practice in their constituency before the end of the year. This initiative is one part of a much wider effort by the Parliamentary Unit to raise MPs' awareness of the issues facing GPs in their individual constituencies. We hope that the MP- GP practice visit scheme will enable MPs to see the 'reality' behind many of the headlines GPs currently receive. A letter was sent to LMCs providing more information on the scheme, including the benefits for LMCs and practices. It is extremely important to try to develop good relationships with MPs. This is part of the next phase of our public activity.

The BMA's Parliamentary Unit would be very grateful for any assistance LMCs could provide in identifying practices willing to host a MP's visit. The Parliamentary Unit also sent LMCs a toolkit to help LMCs and practices get the most out of a MP's visit.

If you have any queries about the scheme, please do feel free to contact Susan Solanki, the BMA's Parliamentary Liaison Officer at either ssolanki@bma.org.uk or 020 7383 6681.

Public Accounts Committee Report - NHS pay modernisation: new contracts for General Practice services in England

The Public Accounts Committee published a report on the GP contract which criticised Government spending on the contract and questioned the benefit to patients. Richard Vautrey spoke against the report on the Today programme, but as expected, there was heavy tabloid coverage.

The BMA challenged suggestions that that GP 'productivity' has decreased, noting in comments to the media the increased in the complexity of consultations and the intensity of the work and highlighting the QOF's long term health benefits. The full press release is available on the website here - www.bma.org.uk/pressrel.nsf/wlu/STRE-7K8GJ8?OpenDocument&vw=wfmms

HPV vaccine

The Department of Health is yet to provide clarification on a number of important issues surrounding the provision of the HPV vaccine, particularly those relating to the format the vaccine is provided in and patient choice. We understand that that there is concern about the lack of clarity and we are continuing to press the DH for guidance. As soon as any information is available the profession will be informed.