

LMC NEWS

Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Medical Committee

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No. 187 June/July 2006

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Items for the Newsletter are always welcome, and should be sent to the Editor, Rosalind Winter, at Sedgemoor Centre, Priory Road, St Austell PL25 5AS (Tel 01726 627978, Fax 01726 76247, e-mail ros@kernow-lmc.demon.co.uk). See also our website at www.kernow-lmc.co.uk

MISUSE OF DRUGS REGULATIONS 2006

Enclosed with this Newsletter is one copy per GP practice of a new Statutory Instrument and Explanatory Memorandum just received from the Department of Health concerning changes to the Misuse of Drugs Regulations which will come in to force on 7 July 2006. More information about the changes is expected shortly.

PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINATIONS

After long delays, the GPC has been able at long last to start negotiations with the NHS Employers regarding the pneumococcal vaccination proposals. There is no possibility of completing these negotiations in time for the Department of Health's proposed June implementation date, and discussions continue about a revised date.

OUT OF HOURS SERVICE

At the WoC Primary Care Development Group meeting on 12 June a question was raised regarding clinical governance issues relating to KUCS and how these should be reported. The response from the PCT representative present was astounding: that KUCS are not primary care providers and that therefore the PCT has no input or role in clinical governance matters!

We are pleased to be able to report that the PCT has since revised this response, and fully accepts that it does have an obligation to ensure that all providers of healthcare have a clinical governance policy and sufficient clinical governance arrangements in place.

The commissioner responsible for managing the OOH contract on behalf of all 3 PCTs is Ms Jenny Bowden, whose role is to ensure that KUCS deliver against their contract. This includes clinical governance. Ms Bowden has confirmed that anyone who has any concerns about patient care provided by KUCS should write to Sue Lloyd, Director of Operations, or Dr Colin Barrett, Medical Director, at Kernow Urgent Care Services, Cudmore House, Oak Lane, Truro TR1 3LP

or email: <mailto:colin.barrett@serco.com>
<mailto:sue.lloyd@serco.com>

We believe that you ought to be entitled to receive an acknowledgement of your complaint or concern within two working days, and a full response (or if that is not possible an interim response indicating that the matter is being actively looked into) within two weeks - ie the same time limits as patients who use your practice-based complaints procedure are entitled to expect. Failing this, you should bring the complaint or concern to Ms Bowden's attention. Contact details:

Ms Jenny Bowden, Head of Service Improvement - Unscheduled Care, Cornwall PCTs, Telephone: 01209 888223 x 8223, Mobile: 07786 431282, email: Jenny.Bowden@westprimcare.cornwall.nhs.uk)

CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES

**From: Dr Debbie Galbraith, Designated Doctor for Child Protection, Cornwall & IoS
Dr Danny Lang, Named Doctor Child Protection CCPCT**

It was good to see the recent article on Child Protection (LMC News Mid April 2006), especially as children's issues appear to have a low profile in current GP and Primary Care writing. This article was discussed at the Child Protection Liaison Group for all Cornwall & IoS Health Agencies. The following points arose:

1. Dr Debbie Galbraith, Designated Doctor for Child Protection, agrees that Child Protection conference minutes, and multi-agency notes made at other meetings about children, should be filed separately from their main record, but points relevant to individual children should be entered on that child's notes. For example, the fact that a child's name has been placed on or removed from the Child Protection Register should be recorded in their main file but the detailed minutes should not, as they contain third party information.
2. Serious Case Reviews on children either killed, seriously abused or neglected in Cornwall (and nationally) show that in the vast majority of cases the children's names were not registered on the Child Protection Register prior to the serious incident.
3. Bearing in mind the changes in the Child Surveillance Programme and the lack of focus on children in the new GP Contract, it would seem important to try and develop a way of recording information on children including growth, development, immunisation status and known risk factors relating to vulnerability and Child Protection.
4. The RCGP has published a Strategy Document titled "Keep Me Safe", highlighting the need for better awareness and training for GPs and their staff to assist with early detection of children who may be in need or at risk of abuse. It is available at http://www.rcgp.org.uk/PDF/corp_childprotection_strategy.pdf. This is in the process of being updated.
5. Training for GPs and Practice Staff continues to prove difficult to spread across the county. Practice Managers have recently received a questionnaire to help define the needs.

COPD 9

From Shona Blass, GPC Senior Policy Executive

A number of queries have come into the office in relation to COPD 9 questioning why it doesn't have a start date of 1 April 2004.

We have now discussed this with the NHSE and we are aware that putting together both COPD2 and COPD3 in to the new QOF COPD9 has not translated well with regard to what happened with the Business Rules.

A new set of Business Rules is currently in preparation and in it COPD 9 will reflect the situation that existed with COPD3 in the 2004 QOF.

This issue will be discussed again in the future but I trust for the time being that provides some clarity on the problem.

QOF BUSINESS RULES - CHANGES

There have been some changes to the business rules for QOF, which can be accessed at the following link - version 8.5 and what has changed.

www.primarycarecontracting.nhs.uk/145.php
GPs are reminded that they should check this link periodically for updates and changes, as these usually happen bi-annually, rather than downloading the business rules into their computers where they may not be aware that changes have been made.

EUROPEAN CITY GUIDE SCAM

Practices may receive letters about this publication, demanding a payment of 937 euros. **Please be aware that this is a scam.** If you receive one of these letters, ignore the demand for payment, and simply pass the letter to your local Trading Standards Office. A correspondent on the LMC Secretaries' ListServer recently wrote:

I was involved with this outfit at one time when ADOC responded to an innocuous looking request for further information and ended up with a bill for nearly £1k. We did not pay, and if you are circulating anything about this scam you can include this web address: <http://www.stopecg.org/>



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WANTED

Maternity Cover Locum
Commencing 1st September 2006 for large, paper-light practice, involved in Choose and Book and Practice Based Commissioning, high scoring QOF 2004/5 and 2005/6. Teaching practice with PMS students and Foundation doctors.

6 sessions per week (days/times to be agreed) for a minimum of 3 months – maybe longer.

Please contact
Sally Poxon, Practice Manager
Carnewater Practice, Dennison Road
Bodmin PL31 2LB Tel 01208 256200

PASSPORT OFFICE

We hear from the Secretariat of North Lincs & East Yorks LMC that Liverpool Passport Office is telling patients to approach their GP for proof of address and to confirm that they have been seen in the last 3 years. The Passport Office apparently thought about letting GPs know about this through the BMA, but decided you would get to know soon enough as letters started arriving at your surgeries. The Passport Office asks applicants for “A letter from your dentist (or only if absolutely necessary your GP) confirming from their records that you have consulted the dentist (or GP) between June 2003 and June 2006 and confirming your current and previous addresses from their records.”

The GPC is taking this up with the Passport Agency and the Better Regulation Executive. In the meantime, the LMC strongly advises that GPs do **NOT** participate, because this work is:

- not part of your NHS contract
- a twofold abuse of your time and NHS resources: a wasted GP appointment and a waste of time writing the letter

You should not take the easy option by undertaking this work privately and charging a fee for it, because doing so:

- will only encourage yet more agencies to dream up yet more ways of wasting GP time
- would be a breach of patient confidentiality unless you first obtained the patient’s written, informed consent to divulge the information.

If patients complain, feel free to show them this Newsletter item, to demonstrate that you are not “being difficult”: you are simply following the advice of your professional representative body.

We hope that the Local Dental Committee will take the same firm line to help us put an end to these requests. Meanwhile, in a spirit of helpfulness we would like to suggest that the Passport Office write instead to the Police for this information (“Please confirm from your records whether the applicant has been arrested and/or charged and/or cautioned between June 2003 and June 2006, and confirm the applicant’s current and previous addresses from your records”).

DR BASIL BILE WRITES ...

I love the Times newspaper. I can remember when it had only bland advertisements on the front page and the pictures and headlines were inside. Those were the days when my school atlas of the world was a cacophony of empire pink and all was well in the Universe. Of course these days The Thunderer has shrunk but not to become a "tabloid". Oh dear me no. That would never do (a bit like calling the new pan-Cornwall PCT a "Health Authority"), so it is known as a "Quality Compact". Nevertheless I can live with all of that as long as its front page continues to reassure a chap. And on Tuesday June 6th 2006 I had no reason to suppose it was going to disappoint me.

Firstly it said "*Newspaper of the Year*" in red ink beneath the masthead. Funny but all the papers seem to have that on their front pages. I suppose they have all come first equal in some competition or other. Then it boasted "*Free Inside World Cup Poster of Thierry Henry*" with a front page pic of Porky Rooney kicking a football with his famous fractured metatarsal. Accidentally I spotted the main headline hidden amongst all this World Cup paraphernalia. "***Doctors to be graded for quality of service***", obviously referring to yet another harebrained scheme to stick hospital consultants into some league table or other. It was then as I scanned the first para that my blood ran cold, the sweat trickled down my furrowed brow, my visage turned puce and my blood pressure went into bally orbit.

"Every doctor's surgery is to be inspected and awarded Michelin-style stars so that patients can tell the quality of care offered by their GPs at a glance". They can tell that now for heaven's sake! One cursory glimpse

of my Disney characters tie and matching socks, Plymouth Argyle cuff links, depilated nostrils and M&S washable suit should tell the blighters they are in the company of unquestionable quality at the sharp end. Apparently we are to be visited and inspected like some back street café by a team of self serving toadying government sycophants poking their noses where the sun don't shine and frankly wasn't mean to. Well bugger that for a game of marbles say I!

To heap ignominy upon ignominy the whole loopy idea seems to have been hatched by the Royal College of Garrulous Practitioners whose chief bottlewasher, one Dr Barmyarmy, seems oblivious of the feelings of those he seeks to lead by banging on about the star ratings scheme making us all more "customer focussed". If you ask my ever humble opinion, the more out of focus our customers are the better, preferably as a tiny blur on the far distant horizon. I wonder if Dr Barmyarmy has ever stopped to ask himself who are the most frequent visitors to our consulting rooms seeking stress-related sickies? Yes, you've guessed it right, readers - school teachers just before some ruddy Ofsted inspection. Dr Ben Chardonnay and the GP Occupational Health Service are going to have their bally work cut out if this misguided lark sees the light of day.

And if you get no stars out of the possible three on offer, ie the dreaded *null point* of the Eurovision Song Contest, you will apparently run the risk, dear colleagues, of being "*dropped by the local primary care trust*". I can hardly wait. Happy landings, playmates. I am packing my parachute now. Last one down is a cissy....