

## LMC Update Email

30 November 2018

Dear Colleagues,

### Prescription direction

Following concerns about communications from online distance selling pharmacies which could be seen as misleading advertising and prescription direction, we have written to NHS England to raise our concerns. We published a statement advising practices not to engage with these companies which could put practices at risk of breaching the GMS regulations prohibiting directions of prescriptions. We have also written directly to Pharmacy2U who have responded saying that they are withdrawing their campaign with Docmail. Read the statement [here](#).

### LMC England conference update

The LMC England Conference was held on 23 November – you can watch the webcast [here](#). The conference resolutions and a copy of my speech are available [here](#).

My speech was covered by [Pulse](#), [GP Online](#) and the [BMJ](#). I was also interviewed by BBC Radio Leeds and Radio Humberside. Coverage of motions and the conference included:

- Calling for an end to trusts delaying ambulances attending emergencies at practices ([Pulse](#))
- Rejecting a call for a co-payments method to fund general practice ([Pulse](#))
- Demanding new money to fund the state-backed indemnity scheme ([GP Online](#))
- Rejecting a call to limit practice lists to 1,500 patients per GP and to reduce practice hours to 8am – 6pm ([Pulse](#))
- GPs being “emotionally blackmailed” to prescribe beyond their competencies, decrying problems for patients in accessing transgender healthcare and eating disorder services ([BMJ](#))
- Voting to end the contractual clause that allows practices to recruit patients from outside their boundaries (GP at Hand) ([Pulse](#), [GP Online](#))

### Scottish LMC Conference

The Scottish LMC conference is being held today in Clydebank. The agenda is available on [this webpage](#), there is a live stream at [bma.streameventlive.com/event5](#) and twitter feed at [#SLMC18](#). The conference was addressed by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, Jeanne Freeman MSP and she gave her commitment to continue working with SGPC on implementation of the new contract changes. She said that it was only with the genuine involvement of GPs, as expert medical generalists, that they would be able to improve care for everyone in Scotland.

### Scottish Sustainability Loan Application

As was highlighted at the Scottish LMC conference today, the GP sustainability loan scheme has opened in Scotland. This is a key part of the GMS contract changes in Scotland, with interest-free loans of up to 20% ‘existing use’ value for GPs that own their own premises to reduce the risks associated with premises ownership. Read more [here](#)

### GP workload

A study in the BMJ has found that GPs are ordering three times more tests than 15 years ago, costing the NHS at least £2.8bn a year, and severely impacting practice workloads. In 2000/2001, GPs ordered 14,869 tests per 10,000 ‘person years’, which takes into account the number of patients and how long they lived. In 2015/16 this had risen to 49,267. The author of the report said: “Our results support other evidence that suggests general practice workload in the UK is reaching saturation point.”

Commenting on the study, I said: *“This study shows the wide range of services now delivered by GPs and their practice teams, meaning patients benefit from receiving more extensive care delivered by a familiar team close to their home, where staff have easy access to their medical history, avoiding the need to be referred to a hospital. This rapid change, with practices now doing a lot of clinical activity that was traditionally done in hospitals, has had a major impact on workload as it has not been matched by the necessary increase in resources, and therefore the government should recognise this by addressing this in their forthcoming long-term plan for the NHS.”*

Read the [BMJ study here](#). It was also reported by the Press Association, [Pulse](#), [GP Online](#) and Yorkshire Post.

### **Cervical cancer screening tests**

The proportion of women having a cervical screening test every five years has reached the lowest level (75.5%) since records began in 1997, according to [new NHS Digital statistics](#). It is even lower at 71.4% for younger women who should be screened every three years. The figures were published just weeks after it was revealed that 48,500 women did not receive reminder letters or results for screenings, due to an error by Capita. In response to this I demanded that Capita is stripped of its contract, and said it was an incredibly serious situation that was potentially putting patients at risk. The story was covered by the [Daily Mail](#), [The Telegraph](#), [The Mirror](#), [The Independent](#) and [Pulse](#).

There was further coverage in the Lancashire Evening Post and Blackpool Gazette, with BMA council deputy chair and Lancashire GP Dr David Wrigley telling the papers that it was the “disastrous decision” of NHS England to hand the contract to Capita that led to the latest error.

### **GP surgery system in Wales unsustainable**

The BMA in Wales has warned that the situation whereby practices are being directly managed by health boards is “unsustainable”, causing an average overspend of £100,000 per practice. A freedom of information request from the BMA to Hywel Dda and Betsi Cadwaladr health boards revealed one Denbighshire surgery reported a deficit of £600,000.

Dr Charlotte Jones, chair of GPC Wales, said that general practice was “on the brink of an abyss, with surgeries serving 10 per cent of the population of Wales at risk of closure. When we have health boards directly managing practices - that is, staffed with locum doctors and healthcare professionals, whether that's physiotherapists, pharmacists - that comes at a huge cost. I think health boards have realised it's an enormous task and might be keen to see them revert back into the previous system. There would be enormous benefits and the changes can be quite immediate.”

Read the article on [BBC](#) online

### **Contract guidance for GPs working in non standard roles**

Increasingly GPs step beyond the conventional boundaries of general practice to forge diverse careers that suit their interests, expertise and skills. It is important for GPs engaging in these roles, in which they might not be protected by nationally agreed TCS, to be aware of their rights and check that the employment offer and their working arrangements are fit for purpose. With this guidance the BMA attempts to help ensure that all GPs receive appropriate employment terms and conditions regardless of their employer. Read the guidance [here](#).

### **Evidence based interventions: Guidance for CCGs**

NHS England has issued new guidance on 17 interventions which evidence suggests are of little or no value to patients. Four of the interventions, such as surgery to prevent snoring, will now only be offered in exceptional circumstances, while a longer list of thirteen interventions such as, breast

reduction surgery or the removal of benign skin lesions will be offered when specific clinical criteria are met. The guidance and supporting information can be found [here](#).

#### **Prescribing Gluten-Free Foods in Primary Care: Guidance for CCGs**

NHS England has developed guidance for CCGs, to communicate changes in regulations, and to support local development of gluten-free food prescribing policies. The new guidance follows consultation by the Department of Health and Social Care and a change in the law which comes into force on 4 December 2018. This will mean that only bread and gluten free 'mixes' will remain available via NHS prescription. Commissioning guidance and associated resources can be found [here](#).

#### **Bricanyl Turbohaler Supply**

The Department of Health and Social Care has provided the following update on Bricanyl Turbohaler supply issues. More information can be found in the attached letter.

- There will be interim deliveries expected in late November and in December but normal supply will not resume until end of January 2019
- Astra Zeneca have provided a Dear HCP letter
- UKMi have produced a [memo which details clinical management strategies](#)

#### **BMA Expert Witness Conference - 8 March 2019**

The Annual BMA Expert Witness Conference will be held on 8 March 2019 at BMA House. This is a one-day conference, for all levels of experience, covering the essentials of working competently as an expert witness. If you are interested in working as a GP expert witness, register your interest by emailing [confunit@bma.org.uk](mailto:confunit@bma.org.uk).

#### **Private practice committee conference - 5 April 2019**

The next Private practice committee annual conference will take place on Friday 5 April 2019 at BMA House, London. The conference is aimed at doctors who are thinking about setting up in private practice and established practitioners who could benefit from some practical advice. To register your interest email [confunit@bma.org.uk](mailto:confunit@bma.org.uk)

Read the latest GPC UK newsletter [here](#)

Have a good weekend.

Richard