

## LMC Update Email

2 November 2018

Dear Colleagues,

### **GPC England Premises Survey**

As you will be aware, we are currently participating in a review of GP premises, which, following our contract agreement last year, is being led by NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care. A 'Call for Solutions', seeking input from interested parties for ways in which the GP premises system could be altered to address issues, was recently undertaken with a wide range of proposals submitted for consideration. Detailed assessment of proposals drawn from this is currently underway.

In order to help inform this process we are now running an important premises survey in order to build a fuller picture of the current landscape for GP premises. The online survey can be found at [www.research.net/r/BMApremisesurvey](http://www.research.net/r/BMApremisesurvey) and will run until 21<sup>st</sup> November, and we'd be grateful if you could forward this on to colleagues and member practices. It only requires one response per practice and should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. For any questions about the survey please contact [info.lmcqueries@bma.org.uk](mailto:info.lmcqueries@bma.org.uk)

### **Budget**

The BMA Health Policy team has produced a briefing on the Budget that was announced on Monday by the Chancellor. This can be accessed by BMA members along with our pre-budget consultation response and letter to the Chancellor [on the BMA website](#). In response to the announcement, I said that more needed to be done to secure the future of general practice and called for a promised £2bn rise for mental health services to be matched in direct spending on GP practices. Read the story in [Pulse](#) and in [GP Online](#)

### **Increased mental health diagnosis**

I was interviewed on LBC radio last Saturday talking about the rise in the number of patients with mental health problems and the difficulties GPs have in accessing appropriate and timely support services for their patients. This linked to the prevalence rates outlined in the annual QOF report released last week which showed that one in ten patients has had depression diagnosed, with this condition overtaking obesity in QOF coding for the first time. Depression is noted by practices almost twice as often as it was five years ago, an indication both of the increased willingness of patients to present with mental health problems and also of the rise in people suffering from anxiety and depression. My comments were also reported in [The Times](#).

### **Flu immunisation for over 65s**

The press have continued to report on the difficulties some patients are having obtaining their annual flu vaccination. The current figures from Public Health England show that 33.8% of over-65s have been vaccinated compared to 53.7% this time last year. I commented that "It's no surprise there is a big drop in uptake so far. This year the phased delivery of vaccine will mean it's only in November that we can ensure that all eligible patients have been given an opportunity to be vaccinated." Andrew Green, GPC prescribing lead, also called for flexible distribution. This was reported in [The Mail](#), [The Mirror](#), the [Express](#) and in the [West Sussex Gazette](#)

Following our lobbying, we now expect an increased publicity campaign to be launched shortly, to encourage eligible patients to make an appointment with their practice in order to be vaccinated before influenza starts circulating later in the winter.

### **Decrease in GP Practices in Northern Ireland**

The Department of Health Northern Ireland has released statistics that show a nearly 5% drop in the number of GP practices between May 2014 to May 2018, but over the same time there had been a 12% increase in the number of GPs. The Northern Ireland GPC chair, Dr Alan Stout, said that the rise in the GP numbers was a headcount number as “significant number of newly-qualified GPs are choosing to work less than full time, which is why we still need more GPs to cover the outstanding hours”. Read the articles in the [Irish News](#) and [Belfast Live](#).

### **Prescribing of cannabis-based products**

The new regulations to widen the availability of cannabis-based medicinal within the NHS came into effect yesterday (1 November 2018). Prescribing is restricted to a doctor on the GMC specialist register prescribing within their field of expertise where the cannabis-based product is an unlicensed ‘special’ medicinal product for use by a specific patient. Once a product receives a licence from the MHRA, it will be available for prescription in the same way as any other Schedule 2 drug.

The BMA has published some [Q&As](#) to explain what these changes mean, which include links to guidance from [NHS England](#), [BPNA \(for children with epilepsy\)](#), and [RCP and RCR \(recommendations on cannabis-based products for medicinal use\)](#).

NHS England has also published a [patient leaflet](#) which helpfully states that ‘*You cannot get cannabis-based medicine from your GP - it can only be prescribed by a specialist hospital doctor*’

### **AI in Healthcare – Horizon programme**

This week the BBC Horizon programme *Diagnosis on Demand? The Computer Will See You Now* looked at AI in health care, mainly focussing on Babylon Health. As well as looking at the issues relating to AI the programme featured comments from many GPs, including GPC member and Tower Hamlets LMC chair Dr Jackie Applebee, raising serious concerns about the out of area registration model of working used by GP at Hand.

The programme concluded saying that an article will be published in the Lancet this month stating ‘Babylon’s study does not offer convincing evidence that its Diagnostic and Triage System can perform better than doctors in any realistic situation, and there is a possibility that it might perform significantly worse..’, rebutting Babylon’s claim that their technology was superior and might outperform the average doctor.

### **Regulation of Physician Associates**

As previously reported, the introduction of statutory regulation for [Physicians’ Associates](#) and Physicians’ Assistants (Anaesthesia) has been announced. This follows a consultation on the regulation of the four Medical Associate Professions (MAPs) in [response to which the BMA called for statutory regulation for MAPs](#).

So far there has been no indication of when full regulation can be expected or which body will have responsibility for regulation of these roles. It also has not been confirmed whether the remaining two MAPs professions will be regulated and that this remains under ‘active consideration’.

### **Physician associates in primary care survey**

As part of the General Practice Forward View, Health Education England (HEE) committed to invest in the training of 1,000 Physician Associates (PAs) to support general practice. To support the delivery of this commitment, they are now planning a campaign to promote and increase numbers of PAs choosing primary care.

To help shape their campaign, HEE is seeking views from GPs and practice managers on their draft materials. If you would like to share your view please complete their [survey](#) by 12 November.

### **Letter to GP Practices regarding data quality checks on patient lists**

NHS England sent the attached letter to all GP practices last week to inform that PCSE will be recommending data quality checks on patient lists.

### **Threat of antimicrobial resistance**

Professor Parveen Kumar, Chair of the BMA's Board of Science, has written a blog on a 'one health' approach to the threat of antimicrobial resistance which can be read [here](#).

### **Medicine supply issue updates**

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has published the medicine supply update for October and it is attached. See also specific updates on Epanutin and Epipen Junior below.

#### Epanutin 30mg/5ml oral suspension

There is an impending supply issue with Epanutin 30mg/5ml oral suspension. Pfizer, the sole supplier, have experienced global delays in the manufacturing and are *anticipating a gap in supply from this week until early December when their next batch arrives*.

#### Epipen junior – batch numbers

Jext recently extended the shelf life of a number of batches of Jext 150mch and 300mch, but there was an error on the original Dear Health Care Professional letter that was attached in the Annex of the pharmacy validation protocol Q&A. Item 13 on the list is Batch number T6930, but the initial letter stated T9630. Jext states that there is no such batch labelled as T9630. Please see updated letter attached.

### **New primary care workload observatory**

The RCGP Research and Surveillance Centre (RCGP RSC) and Surrey Heartlands Health and Care Partnership are leading an NHS England-funded project to create a new way to understand the demand on GPs. The new national 'workload and case-mix observatory' will be created at the RCGP RSC secure data and analytics hub at the University of Surrey and will collect and monitor data from a network of more than 350 practices across England.

They are looking to increase the number of practices that are currently part of the network; joining will provide practices with the opportunity to be at the forefront of this new development. Further information about the project and how to sign up is available in the attached document.

### **Consent form for the disclosure of medical records to solicitors**

The BMA and Law Society have updated the joint template consent form for the disclosure of medical records to solicitors (for use in England and Wales). The template has undergone a refresh so that it reflects the General Data Protection Regulation. The aim of the template is to help improve the process of seeking consent and to ensure that patients are well informed about these disclosures. You can access the template form [here](#) and it is also available within our [guidance on access to health records](#), and as part of the [ethics A-Z](#) – under C.

### **LMC England Conference agenda**

The agenda for the 2018 Conference of England LMCs to be held on *Friday 23 November 2018* at the Mermaid exhibition centre, London, has now been published. The agenda, and further information such as honoraria and expenses guidance, can be accessed [here](#).

**LMC Wales Conference agenda**

The Welsh Conference of LMCs will take place on Saturday 10 November 2018 at the Vale Hotel, Hensol, Vale of Glamorgan. There are over 100 motions set for debate by members of conference. Popular topics include sustainability, workload, the future of primary care clusters, and the GMC. Access the agenda [here](#).

**LMC Secretaries Conference**

The agenda and letter of invitation to the LMC Secretaries Conference on 14 December, BMA House, London, was sent out to LMCs earlier this week, and are also attached for information. The online application form for [nominations and choosing workshops is available](#) on the BMA website, with a deadline of 14 November. For further information please refer to the attached letter.

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

Have a nice weekend.

Richard