

To: Surrey, Sussex and London LMCs GP Practices

30th August 2017

Dear Colleagues

Community Pharmacy Influenza Immunisation Scheme

I am writing to all colleagues regarding the Pharmacy Flu Immunisation Scheme. This was negotiated two years ago and has been extended to cover Winter 2017/18.

It permits eligible Community Pharmacists to offer NHS Flu Immunisation to the public under the same eligibility criteria as in the General Practitioners' Influenza Direct Enhanced Service, based on the Chief Medical Officer's recommendations within the annual 'Flu Letter'. Community Pharmacists have to offer appropriate facilities, check eligibility, and communicate with a patient's General Practitioner (via the NHS England funded PharmOutcomes Database (Sonar in London) using GP email addresses as supplied by NHS England) that the patient has been immunised, so their medical records can be updated.

The LMC is in regular contact with LPC [Local Pharmaceutical Committees] colleagues. The LMC understands, and the LPC is aware, that GP colleagues do not feel the situation represents a 'level playing field' despite the increased immunisation fee now received by General Practitioners, as the GP fee covers call and recall administrative tasks that Community Pharmacists do not have to provide, and there is, currently, no requirement for Community Pharmacists to be CQC registered with the associated costs both financially and in terms of staff time that this entails. However, I think it is important for GP colleagues to acknowledge that none of these issues are the consequence of decisions by local LPCs or individual Community Pharmacist colleagues. These are national issues and all have been raised with NHS England by Surrey and Sussex and other LMCs and the GPC.

General Practitioners and Community Pharmacy colleagues are equally at liberty to advertise and promote their immunisation services and the LMC encourages practices to pro-actively do so, but both LPCs and the LMC would urge colleagues that when doing so, they do not express this in ways that undermine the other's professionalism or infer that one service is better than another; thus Community Pharmacists implying that GP practices are 'too busy' to deliver an immunisation service, or that by attending a Community Pharmacy the public 'reduce the workload' at GP practices is unacceptable. Equally, General Practitioner colleagues should not indicate or imply they will treat Community Pharmacists differently in any way if they decide not to deliver the NHS flu immunisation scheme or instead direct patients to their GP practice for this service. Community Pharmacists are not permitted to link the NHS flu immunisation scheme with any other offer of service or promotion.

Community Pharmacists should not, in the LMC's view, create work for GP colleagues whilst delivering their service; thus, if there is doubt about a patient's eligibility, practices are not expected to assist with such queries.

Information about immunisations should be passed promptly and accurately to the patient's practice using PharmOutcomes (Sonar in London) as directed by NHS England. Equally, practices should ensure they monitor these communications.

Some community pharmacists will also be providing a private flu vaccination service which is outside of the NHS commissioned service

GP colleagues should be aware that Community Pharmacists are likely to receive delivery of flu vaccines during the week commencing 18th September 2017, and can be expected to advertise this service in line with this timescale. GP Practices may therefore wish to anticipate this in any advertising or promotion of their flu immunisation service.

Both the LMC and LPCs are committed to resolving any difficulties that may arise as a result of this scheme. Colleagues are asked to contact their own professional committees in the event of any concerns and refer each other to their representatives, these being:

Surrey and Sussex LMC (also covering Croydon, Kingston and Richmond)
Dr Julius Parker: Julius.Parker@sslmcs.co.uk

Surrey and West Sussex LPC
Mr Martin Mandelbaum: martin03mandelbaum@gmail.com

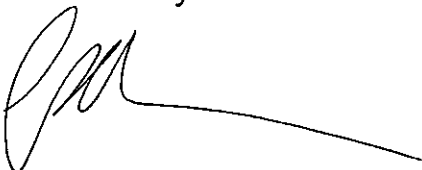
East Sussex LPC
Ms Vanessa Taylor: vanessam.taylor@btopenworld.com

Kingston and Richmond LPC
Mr Terry Silverstone: tpscps@aol.com

Croydon LPC
Mr Andrew McCoig: croydonlpc@btinternet.com

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely



Dr Julius Parker
Chief Executive