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## GPC meeting

The GPC met on 19 May 2011 and this newsletter provides a summary of the main items discussed.

## Electing leaders to shadow and pathfinder consortia

We have received a number of enquiries from sessional GPs and LMCs concerning local elections to leadership positions to shadow and pathfinder consortia.

The GPC's view, formally expressed at their meeting of 17 March 2011, and contained in our revised guidance [Shadow and Pathfinder Consortia: developing and electing a transitional leadership](#) issued in April, and available on the BMA website is as follows:

In order to maintain local professional confidence, all transitional arrangements towards clinically-led commissioning consortia must,

- where creating a clinical leadership team, include a democratic electoral process, that is inclusive and open to all GPs working in the proposed locality whatever their contractual status, and with one GP one vote
- where a practice level decision is required, for example regarding the practice choice of proposed consortium, every practice must have in place a mechanism which ensures that all GPs working in the practice are appropriately involved in the decision-making process.

Where there is concern that local consortia election procedures are not adhering to GPC policy, we advise LMCs to contact their local consortia leaders to remind them, and if necessary their constituent practices, of the importance of an inclusive and open process in relation to consortia governance.

The Chairman of GPC will be writing to LMCs in England about this matter shortly.

### **Care Quality Commission registration toolkit - guidance for GPs**

From 1 October 2011, all GP practices and other NHS primary medical services providers in England will be invited to apply for registration with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and will need to be registered by 1 April 2012.

The GPC has developed a toolkit to attempt to reduce the burden of the application process by providing a straightforward, plain English explanation of CQC registration, provide information on applying for registration and suggestions on what you could be doing to meet the CQC's Essential Standards of Quality and Safety. This toolkit also highlights the current situation regarding demonstrating compliance.

The guidance in this toolkit will be updated if and when the expectations from CQC change. If you have any queries about CQC registration then BMA members can contact the BMA on **0300 123 1233**. Local Medical Committees should contact the General Practitioners Committee secretariat.

[The toolkit is available on the BMA website.](#)

### **Quality and productivity QOF work**

We are in the process of finalising guidance on the prescribing, out-patient referrals and emergency admissions indicators, and hope to publish these as soon as possible.

## QoF business rules

It has been brought to our attention that there is an issue in relation to the Business Rules Read codes for QOF indicator MH14. This is currently being investigated by the DH, NHS IC and NHSE and will be corrected. We will issue more information and guidance on this shortly.

### Issue with Read code MH14 within QOF Business Rules v19

An issue has been identified with the Mental Health HDL:total cholesterol cluster (HDLTCHOL\_COD) within the version 19.0 ruleset of the Business Rules.

This will be rectified by the NHS IC when producing the version 20.0 ruleset of the Business Rules that incorporates any relevant codes from the April code release.

The erroneous codes 44PG. and XaEil will be removed from this cluster and replaced with:

Read V2

44PF. Total cholesterol:HDL ratio  
44I2. Cholesterol/HDL ratio  
44IF. Serum cholesterol/HDL ratio  
44IG. Plasma cholesterol/HDL ratio

CTV3:

44PF. Total cholesterol:HDL ratio  
XaERR Cholesterol/HDL ratio  
XaEUq Serum cholesterol/HDL ratio  
XaEUr Plasma cholesterol/HDL ratio

The Business Rules version 20.0 are expected to be made available to GPSS and published to the PCC website before the end of this month.

## Changes to regulations regarding NHS availability of antivirals for flu

There have been some changes to the regulations regarding NHS availability of antivirals for flu, adding a new category of patient, to allow GPs to prescribe antiviral treatments on the NHS for patients not in one of the designated 'at clinical risk' groups, but who are at risk of developing complications from flu. Therefore oseltamivir and zanamivir may in certain circumstances be ordered for those who are under 65 years of age, who are not pregnant, nor considered to be at clinical risk, but who are considered to be at risk of developing complications from the symptoms of influenza.

[The NHS \(General Medical Services Contracts\)\(Prescription of Drugs etc.\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#) came into force on 20 April and details of these are also published in [Part XVIII B of the Drug Tariff](#).

## **Fitness to drive guidance**

The GPC has received some queries regarding the status of changes to the rules regarding driving and diabetes. The confusion appears to have arisen as a result of the DVLA publishing a revised version of their "At a glance guide to the current medical standards of fitness to drive" at the same time as they published the Department of Transport's consultation on UK driving licence standards, in February 2011.

The 'At a glance' document contained some changes from the August 2010 version. These included changing the categories for diabetes "managed by tablets" and accommodating additional criteria for Group 1 and 2 drivers such as, the requirement that the person "must not have had more than one episode of hypoglycaemia requiring the assistance of another person within the preceding 12 months". [The up-to-date guidance can be found online.](#)

The Department for Transport's consultation document asked for views on changes to UK driving licence standards in order to harmonise with EU directives. Among other items, the consultation recommends that those applying to drive Group 1 vehicles (cars and motorbikes) must not suffer from recurrent hypoglycaemia or impaired awareness of hypoglycaemia - so driving licences would not be issued to, or renewed, for those in this category. For Group 2 vehicles (buses and lorries) they are consulting on the possibility for drivers being treated for diabetes being able to apply for entitlement to drive all group 2 vehicles, but within very strict criteria. Any changes to the regulations would probably only come into force around this time next year - subject to agreement. The DVLA's "At a glance" guidance would then be updated appropriately.

The deadline for this consultation was 28 April 2010 and the BMA has sent its response. [This consultation can be found online.](#)

## **Joint statement on changes to the ABPI Code of Practice**

The BMA has joined 16 other organisations in supporting two key changes to the [Association of British Pharmaceutical Industries \(ABPI\) Code of Practice](#) which was published in March 2011.

From 1st May 2011, the pharmaceutical industry will no longer be allowed to provide branded promotional aids, such as pens, pads and mugs, to healthcare professionals.

From 2012, companies will be required to collect and declare on an annual basis aggregate total amounts paid to health professionals and others for certain services such as speaker fees and participation in advisory boards. Similarly companies will be required to declare sponsorship for attendance at meetings organised by third parties. The first declaration of payments will be in 2013 for payments made in 2012. The Code does not require individual health professionals to be named but does require the total number of health professionals involved to be declared and the total number of meeting attendances sponsored.

A link to the [joint statement is available on the BMA website.](#)

## **NHS Reform listening exercise**

The BMA is encouraging members to feed their views on the future shape of the NHS in England into the government's 'listening exercise'. [There is a new hub page on the BMA website](#) – where you can complete a structured feedback form that will inform the BMA submission to the NHS Future Forum, due to be sent in the end of the month. We are also using the page to inform members of how they can input their views to the Future Forum via the DH, and will be hosting a web-chat on the website on the evening of Monday 16 May, with members of the Future Forum taking part.

## **Negative comments posted on the NHS Choices website**

The GPC has been made aware that there is some confusion concerning the procedures in place when a practice receives notification of negative comments posted on the NHS Choices website.

To clarify, practices are notified of a comment pertaining to them following the publication of the comment. An alert is sent to a named recipient at the practice in question (usually the practice manager although this will be designated by the practice). Practices then have two options:

1. Post a reply, in order to put across the practice's views and deal with any issues raised. This will appear immediately below the original comment.
2. Report the comment to the website moderator as unsuitable.

NHS Choices have a ['comments policy' on their website](#) which states that should a comment be flagged by a practice as unsuitable, then this will alert their moderators to take down the comment, consider it, and then either remove it or re-instate it as they deem appropriate.

The following NHS Choices guidance may assist practices in managing any comments they receive:

[Managing patient feedback](#)

[Best practice – responding to patient feedback](#)

## **GPC guidance on ethnicity and first language recording**

The Ethnicity and First Language DES, which was introduced as part of the 2008/09 contract negotiations, was withdrawn on 1 April 2011. This DES was intended as a two-year catch up to enable practices to record ethnicity and first language for patients already on their list, with a third year extension for 2010/11.

Despite the withdrawal of this DES, it is expected that practices would want to continue to record their patients' first language and ethnicity as a matter of routine in order to assess the needs of their population. However, this is a practice choice as there is no longer any contractual requirement to

do so. Practices cannot be compelled to carry out this work. This guidance highlights the published codes for ethnicity and first language so that practices can continue to record this data.

The GPC guidance on [ethnicity and first language recording is available on the BMA website](#).

## **Sessional GP and prison GP representation on GPC**

GPC has agreed to co-opt 4 sessional GPs and 1 prison GP to GPC for the 2011-2012 session.

GPC has proposed to the BMA's Annual Representative Meeting that the membership of GPC be formally changed to allocate four seats on GPC to members of the GPC Sessional GPs subcommittee. If accepted, this will take effect later in the year, and the four co-opted sessional GPs will be replaced by the four nominated members of the GPC Sessional GPs subcommittee.

## **Guidance on the Bribery Act 2010**

We would like to draw to the attention of LMCs and practices the government's guidance on the Bribery Act 2010 which has just been published [and is available online](#). The guidance is intended to help organisations understand the legislation and deal with the risks of bribery. The Act comes into force on 1 July 2011.

## **LMC conference agenda 2011**

The agenda for the Conference of Local Medical Committees (LMCs) 2011 has now been published on the BMA website along with letters from the Chairman of Conference and the GPC secretariat. Also included on the website is information regarding the location of the conference centre, local amenities and a guidance for representatives.

Copies of the agenda and other papers have been sent out to all LMC representatives, observers and GPC members attending this year's conference. One copy of the both letters and agenda have also been sent to all LMC offices.

[LMC conference agenda - download the pdf](#)

[Letters and other relevant information and downloads](#)

## **Prison GP conference 2011 - Please pass this on to prison GPs in your area**

The British Medical Association is holding a one day conference for prison GPs called 'Prison GPs, Changing Times' on Friday 16 September 2011 at BMA House, London. The conference will cover key issues for prison GPs including revalidation, CPD, and the Offender Health pathway and include workshops for salaried GPs and contractors.

The conference is free for BMA members and only £50 (inc VAT) for non-BMA members. Further information, including the conference programme and information about how to register is [available on the BMA website](#).

## **GP employment law courses 2011**

### **Managing change, managing performance, managing staff**

Keeping track of employment legislation, best practice and other human resource issues can be a real headache. With the best will in the world, you know you cannot be an expert on everything: that is why you have the BMA right behind you to give expert advice and support. However, it is important to understand the principles of employment legislation and practical management of people issues to ensure a good working environment and that you do not find yourselves facing a legal challenge.

The BMA is offering three one-day courses introducing GP practices to managing change, managing performance and managing staff.

### **Cost to attend**

Registration is open to GP partners or their practice managers and the registration fees are as below:

BMA members: £130.00 including VAT

Non-members: £190.00 including VAT

Priority will be given to BMA members who wish to attend, and we would encourage you to book your place as soon as possible.

For more information on dates and venues and the online booking form [please visit our website](#).

## **GPC secretariat**

A copy of our staffing structure to reflect staffing changes is attached at appendix 1. We would be grateful if LMCs would direct all enquiries to their liaison officer. A copy of the LMC regional structure is also attached at appendix 2.

**The GPC next meets on 21 July 2011, and LMCs are invited to submit items for discussion. You may like to review these, beforehand, with the representatives in your area who serve on the GPC. The closing date for**

items is 12 July 2011. It would be helpful if items could be emailed to Holly Trotman at [htrotman@bma.org.uk](mailto:htrotman@bma.org.uk). You may also like to use the GPC's listservers to exchange views and ideas.

## **GPC News**

GPC News is available via the Internet, via the BMA's web pages: [www.bma.org.uk](http://www.bma.org.uk)

LMCs are reminded that their regional representatives can provide more detailed information about the issues covered in GPC News, and other matters. Other members of the GPC would also be pleased to accept invitations to LMC meetings wherever possible. Their names and addresses are in the GPC Yearbook. The secretariat can also provide a written background brief if required, but it would be helpful to have such requests well in advance of your meetings.

Finally, if LMCs require assistance on local issues, they can also contact the BMA's local offices: addresses are on page 3 of the GPC's yearbook.

This newsletter has been sent to:

- Secretaries of LMCs and LMC offices
- Members of the GPC
- Members of the GP trainees subcommittee
- Members of the sessional GPs subcommittee