

SHEFFIELD LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2007

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LMC OFFICE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR OPENING TIMES

Please note the following changes to the LMC's normal office opening times:

Mon 24 Dec: 9 am – 2 pm
Tues 25 Dec: CLOSED
Wed 26 Dec: CLOSED
Thurs 27 Dec: 10 am – 5 pm
Fri 28 Dec: 9 am – 5 pm
Mon 31 Dec: 9 am – 2 pm
Tues 1 Jan: CLOSED

DENTAL PROBLEMS: GP RESPONSIBILITIES

It was with concern that the LMC noted Health Minister Ben Bradshaw's comment regarding access to urgent dental treatment, namely that "if people need urgent treatment they should go either to their GP or the primary care trust and demand what is their right". We understand that the GPC has raised concerns nationally.

In order to assist practices when they are put in the position of

having to refuse treatment to patients who need to access dental services, we have produced guidance entitled *Dental Problems: GP Responsibilities*. The guidance includes links to GPC guidance and information obtained from Sheffield PCT detailing how patients can access dental services / information in Sheffield. A copy of the guidance can be downloaded from the LMC Guidance section of the LMC's website:

http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/lmc_guidance.htm

DIRECTION OF PRESCRIPTIONS

The LMC has been made aware that occasionally concerns are raised regarding GPs preferentially directing patients to particular pharmacies. Although current regulations do not prohibit this, the LMC would like to remind GPs of the following extract from the General Medical Council's guidance *Good Practice in Prescribing Medicines*:

Doctors' interests in pharmacies:

- You should ensure that your patients have access to information about your own and (where known) your employers' financial or commercial interests in any pharmacy they are likely to use.
- Patients should be free to choose from which pharmacy to have their prescribed medicines dispensed. Advice about specialist pharmacies or those that offer collection and delivery services, for example, can be helpful. It might not be practical or clinically appropriate for patients to use alternative pharmacies when in hospital or visiting clinics at which medicines are dispensed free of charge.
- You must not allow your own or your employers' financial or commercial interests in a pharmacy to influence the way you advise patients. You should not accept any inducement which may affect or be seen to affect the advice you give patients. You must

not pressurise patients to use a particular pharmacy in any event, either personally or through an agent, nor should you disparage or otherwise undermine patients' trust in a pharmacy or pharmacist by making malicious or unfounded criticisms.

POLICE REFERRALS TO GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

The LMC office continues to receive queries from practices regarding patients being sent to their GP for documenting of injuries when no medical treatment is required. For up-to-date advice on this issue please see the FAQs section of the LMC's website:

http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/FAQs_policereferrals.htm

REQUESTS FOR MEDICAL EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF APPEALS AGAINST BENEFIT WITHDRAWAL/REFUSAL

The LMC office continues to receive queries from practices regarding GPs being asked to provide medical evidence to support patients who are appealing against benefits being withdrawn or refused. For up-to-date advice on this issue please see the FAQs section of the LMC's website:

http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/FAQs_benefits.htm

HPV VACCINE

There has been some discussion on the issue of whether GPs should vaccinate women with the HPV vaccine in the absence of the national programme having started or who fall outside the national programme once it has started.

The GPC's Clinical and Prescribing Subcommittee recently wrote to the Chief Medical Officer on this issue, following which the GPC has clarified that it need not just be an individual GP decision, as PCTs should have formulated a view on this. Once the national programme is rolled out, specific guidance will be issued to explain the prescribing and administering of the HPV vaccine. In the meantime, GPs will need to satisfy themselves that they have taken into account any local guidance from their PCT before deciding, exceptionally, whether to prescribe the vaccine.

The current Department of Health position on this is as follows:

Prior to implementation of the national programme in September 2008 and in groups that fall outside the recommended ages for the routine programme, GPs may exceptionally prescribe the vaccine if the clinical circumstances of a patient warrant such action.

GP PATIENT SURVEY

The Department of Health has issued new guidance on the GP Patient Survey. A copy of the guidance can be downloaded at:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_081112

The survey will be launched in January 2008 and will include changes in arrangements following lessons learned from 2006/07. Practices should receive questionnaire packs in the week commencing 14 January 2008.

TPP SYSTEM ONE UPDATE

Practices may be aware, particularly through feedback from Practice Managers meetings, that Sheffield PCT

appears to be favouring this hosted provider.

The LMC Executive understands that this is a direct initiative from the Yorkshire and Humber Strategic Health Authority and is trying to clarify the current situation with regard to funding and how this policy fits with the Department of Health and GPC supported GP Systems of Choice (GPSoC).

We will keep you informed of any further information we receive. In the meantime, we would advise that practices consider how other healthcare workers may be able to add information to this system. We would consider it important for practices to have conversations with their allied healthcare teams, particularly the district nurses, to make them aware of the implications for practice databases, particularly in relation to Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) targets. At present it would appear extremely difficult to remove a diagnosis that has been added in error, or without consultation with the practice, and we would suggest a clear policy on data entry is agreed with other involved parties.

Please forward any articles, comments etc for inclusion in the LMC newsletter to the LMC office via:

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Articles for the January 2007 edition of the LMC newsletter to be received by **Monday 14 January 2007**.