

SHEFFIELD LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2008

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BMA SUPPORT YOUR SURGERY CAMPAIGN

The BMA has launched a national "Support Your Surgery" campaign to defend and promote NHS GP services in England.

The campaign focuses on the high quality of services provided by NHS GPs, and GPs' concerns about government plans to introduce more commercial providers into primary care and to develop polyclinics/large health centres, even in areas where there is no proven need.

The campaign has been designed to raise public awareness and to stress concerns that the current government policy could destabilise existing services, depersonalise patient care and put some GP practices at risk of closure.

The centrepiece of the Support Your Surgery Campaign is a petition in the form of a NHS General Practice 60th Birthday Card.

A campaign pack containing the birthday card, petition, posters and patient information leaflets were posted to all GP practices on Friday 16 May.

Further details can be found on:

www.supportyoursurgery.org.uk/index.php

All of the signatures collected by GP practices will be collated by the BMA and presented to the Prime Minister on Thursday 12 June, the first day of LMC Conference.

The GPC is encouraging GPs to:

- display the petition and other campaign material prominently;
- explain the issues to patients and the public;
- collect as many signatures as possible from patients and the public in support of the petition;
- return the petition to the BMA **on Friday 6 June**.

The BMA will also be publicising the campaign in the national media.

The LMC has also been issued with a toolkit and is in the process of alerting practices to this issue and considering what other action would be appropriate.

CREMATION FORMS AND THE REVIEW OF DEATH CERTIFICATION

Practices will no doubt be aware that there is an ongoing review of death certification and cremation since the publication of the Shipman Inquiry's third report and the Home Office review of these matters.

Some changes have already been made, for instance the very strong guidance that cremation should be refused unless the doctor signing Form C confirms that s/he has spoken to a relative or carer of the deceased or to some other person who can confirm what the doctor signing Form B has said.

It has been noticed that there may have been instances around the country where doctors have signed Form B or C without having seen and examined the body of the deceased after death.

The GPC has been asked to remind GPs that this is a criminal offence under the Cremation Act 1902, with a possible punishment of up to two years' imprisonment. The GPC believes that police forces and the Crown Prosecution Service would take seriously and investigate any allegation of such behaviour. In addition, the GMC would be likely to view as serious misconduct the completion of the Form B or C with a statement that the body had been seen when in fact this was not the case.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS ON DOCTORS

The LMC's guidance on pre-employment checks that should be carried out on doctors has been updated to include some additional sources of guidance and information.

A copy of the latest version can be accessed via the LMC website at:

[http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/lmc%20guidance/Pre-employment checks on doctors\[1\].pdf](http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/lmc%20guidance/Pre-employment%20checks%20on%20doctors[1].pdf)

THE FUTURE REGULATION OF HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE IN ENGLAND

Subject to Parliamentary approval, the Health and Social Care Bill will establish the Care Quality Commission. From April 2009, the new Commission will take over the functions of the Healthcare Commission, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and the Mental Health Act Commission (MHAC).

It is proposed that eventually, it will be essential for all providers of general practice to register with the Care Quality Commission. In order to register, particular levels of safety and quality will have to be demonstrated. The intention is for the registration system to come progressively into force from April 2010.

It is possible to view and respond to the consultation via the following link to the Department of Health website:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_083625.

The closing date for responses is **17 June 2008**.

CHOOSE AND BOOK (C&B): CLINICAL ISSUES

The relatively low uptake of C&B in Sheffield has been a regular agenda item for meetings of Sheffield LMC and PCT representatives.

Although improvements to the DoS have been made, concerns continue to be raised, particularly around referrals being refused.

The LMC has been in contact with Dr Geoff Schrecker, who has worked tirelessly to resolve clinical issues with the C&B system. Geoff has kindly agreed to continue his efforts and, as a result, it would be appreciated if you could forward examples of any clinical issues you are currently experiencing with C&B to:

geoff.schrecker@gmail.com.

In order for the LMC to be aware of what the outstanding issues are and how these progress, it would be appreciated if you could copy your communications to:

administrator@sheffieldlmc.org.uk.

NICE GUIDANCE FOR PRIMARY CARE

The issue of NICE guidance circulated to all GPs was discussed at the full LMC meeting in May. After a general discussion, it was accepted that it was the responsibility of individual GPs to make themselves aware of latest guidance on important clinical issues.

Although the PCT has a NICE facilitator, Martin Ferris (Head of Clinical Audit & Effectiveness), it has been clarified that his role is to monitor implementation of NICE guidance rather than make GPs aware of it. It was noted that PCT Pharmacy Advisors raised awareness of new guidance in the PCT prescribing newsletter.

The LMC would like to bring your attention to recent topics of considerable relevance to primary care including:

- Inhaled Corticosteroids and the treatment of chronic asthma in adults and children aged 12 and over (Professor Sabroe is, apparently, working on a paper with regard to this).
- Antenatal Care.
- Antibiotic Prophylaxis against infective endocarditis.

Further details and guidance documents can be accessed via:

www.nice.org.uk.

ANTICOAGULATION MONITORING BOOKS

On the recommendation of the Haematologists at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital (RHH), the NPSA yellow booklet for Warfarin

monitoring has been superseded by the Sheffield Teaching Hospital's *Living with Anticoagulation* booklet (Oat Packs).

All new patients coming out of hospital Anticoagulation Clinics will be issued with this booklet.

Practices should be aware that they may be running two different types of books for a short period of time – it is suggested that as old books are filled, patients are transferred to the new booklet.

To order copies of the new booklet please contact:

Brincliffe House, Sheffield PCT
Tel: (0114) 271 1002/3.

QUALITY AND OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK GUIDANCE 2008

Annex 1 to *Revisions to the GMS contract 2006/07 Delivering investment in general practice* has been amended and reissued to take into account the changes to the QOF for 2008.

A copy of the annex can be downloaded from:

- the GPC website:
[http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/PDFQoF2008/\\$FILE/QoFGuidance_April2008.pdf?OpenElement&Highlight=2,quality,outcomes,framework,guidance,2008](http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/PDFQoF2008/$FILE/QoFGuidance_April2008.pdf?OpenElement&Highlight=2,quality,outcomes,framework,guidance,2008)
- the LMC website:
<http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/guidance.htm>

The main change is the removal of 58.5 points from the holistic points, patient experience and organisational domain. For more information on the changes see the GPC guidance *Focus on Quality and Outcomes Framework 2008*, which can be downloaded from:

- the GPC website at:
[http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/PDFfocusQOF0308/\\$FILE/QOF2008.pdf](http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/PDFfocusQOF0308/$FILE/QOF2008.pdf)

- the LMC website at:
<http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/guidance.htm>

MOBILITY BLUE BADGE ASSESSMENTS

All practices should have received a communication from Sheffield PCT's physiotherapy services regarding changes to the blue badge system which were implemented in April 2008.

Following the introduction of the new system, applicants still apply to Sheffield City Council but immediate feedback is given on eligibility. If the applicant does not fulfil the criteria, they will complete an assessment form and be given an appointment to attend an assessment clinic. An appeals process is also in place. However, at no point in the entire process will a letter of support for the applicant be required from their GP.

Any patients taking it upon themselves to request such a letter should be directed back to:

Sheffield City Council
Tel: (0114) 273 4897.

MEDICAL REPORTS FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

It has been brought to the LMC's attention that the process agreed between the LMC and Sheffield City Council for medical reports for rehousing purposes is not being applied for homeless people. Having two systems for medical reporting for homeless people and patients on the housing list seems unnecessary.

Following discussion with PCT representatives, the PCT has agreed to facilitate a meeting between PCT, Council and LMC representatives. In the meantime, it would be appreciated if practices encountering any problems with medical report requests for homeless people could inform the LMC via email to:

administrator@sheffieldlmc.org.uk

CHILDREN'S CENTRE DEVELOPMENTS

Further to the article in the April 2008 edition of the LMC newsletter, the LMC can report that further discussions have been held on this issue.

GPs' concerns were raised with Sheffield PCT and agreement was reached that a meeting would be arranged involving representatives from the PCT, LMC and the hospital Trust midwifery directorate. It is hoped that policies and procedures can be agreed on that will improve the lines of communication between midwives and GP practices, as well as dealing with specific issues such as safe and appropriate systems for receipt of hospital test results ordered by midwives.

As previously requested, it would be appreciated if any practices experiencing difficulties could inform the LMC via:

administrator@sheffieldlmc.org.uk

ECHO CARDIOGRAPHY REPORTS

The issue of Echo Cardiography reports was discussed at a full LMC meeting, in response to concerns raised by some LMC members that these reports, particularly from the Northern General Hospital (NGH), were being received with a sonographer's report, but without a consultant opinion at the bottom.

Clarification on the current situation has been sought from the combined Trusts. At the present time, there would appear to be an inconsistency with Echo Cardiogram reporting between the two Trust sites. The Royal Hallamshire Hospital (RHH) tends to give consultant opinions on virtually every report, whereas the NGH relies solely on the accredited sonographer's report. This appears to have arisen largely from historical staffing and funding issues.

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Trust has suggested that they will try to implement a more diagnostic statement at the bottom of the

sonographer's reports, but have also suggested that a number of GPs are referring patients for Echo Cardiography reports for inappropriate reasons, for example hypertension.

The LMC has agreed to remind practices that the Open Access Echo Cardiography request card suggests the indications for Echo Cardiography, which are as follows:

- Symptoms and signs of heart failure and an abnormal ECG or chest x-ray;
- If the patient has a murmur, is there Echo Cardiogram evidence to confirm valvular disease.

The Trust's Echo Cardiography Departments would find it extremely useful if GPs could restrict their requests to these criteria, or discuss requests for Echo Cardiograms for other indications with the department prior to referral.

It has been suggested that Echo Cardiograms may be appropriate in patients with newly diagnosed atrial fibrillation (prior to commencing anticoagulation in the community) but this issue has not been resolved and may be encompassed in the new Clinical Pathway Development.

LAUNCH OF EASYHEALTH WEBSITE

The GPC has been asked to draw GPs' attention to the website:

www.easyhealth.org.uk.

The website pulls together health information from across the UK on to one website.

At present the website contains information from over 50 organisations across the country. It has been built to make it easier for people to find health information they can understand. About 97% of the information is free so that people can download this information immediately.

Easyhealth has tried to make the website as easy to use as possible for all patients, but in particular for those

patients with lower reading skills/levels.

The most important aspect for GPs would be the blue health leaflets section.

MAINTENANCE OF GMS PRACTICE RESOURCES IN THE EVENT OF AN INFLUENZA PANDEMIC

The NHS Employers and the GPC have reached agreement on the maintenance of GMS practice resources in the event of an influenza pandemic. Two guidance documents have been produced:

1. [Costing Methodology for GMS practice payments during an influenza pandemic](#)

This outlines which payments are covered by the agreement, eligibility for income protection and calculating GMS payments.

2. [Principles for GMS practice payments during an influenza pandemic](#)

This outlines the broad principles that have been agreed between NHS Employers and the GPC. It includes principles for protecting practice income and expense payments.

The guidance documents can be downloaded from:

- the GPC website:

[http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/PDFflupandemic0508_methodology/\\$FILE/Pandemicflu_methodology_May2008.pdf?OpenElement&Highlight=2,pandemic.flu](http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/PDFflupandemic0508_methodology/$FILE/Pandemicflu_methodology_May2008.pdf?OpenElement&Highlight=2,pandemic.flu)

[http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/PDFflupandemic0508_negotiations/\\$FILE/Pandemicflu_negotiations_May2008.pdf?OpenElement&Highlight=2,influenza.pandemic](http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/PDFflupandemic0508_negotiations/$FILE/Pandemicflu_negotiations_May2008.pdf?OpenElement&Highlight=2,influenza.pandemic)

- the LMC website:

<http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/guidance.htm>

SAVING MOTHERS' LIVES: REVIEWING MATERNAL DEATHS TO MAKE MOTHERHOOD SAFER

The LMC has received a request from the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Directorate at Jessops Wing to bring GPs' attention to the CEMACH (Confidential Enquiries into Maternal & Child Health) guidance *Saving Mothers' Lives: Reviewing maternal deaths to make motherhood safer, 2003-2005*.

The guidance, published by CEMACH in December 2007, reports on confidential enquiries into maternal deaths in the UK and has a chapter dedicated specifically to GPs - Chapter 17: Issues for General Practitioners (pages 213 – 228).

A copy of the full report can be downloaded in PDF format from the CEMACH website at:

http://www.cemach.org.uk/getattachment/8f5c1ed8-fdf3-489b-a182-e53955bec07b/Saving-Mothers--Lives-2003-2005_full.aspx

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

Email:

administrator@sheffieldlmc.org.uk

Fax:

(0114) 258 9060

Post:

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Articles for the June 2008 edition of the LMC newsletter to be received *by Friday 13 June 2008*.