

# **MORGANNWG LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE**

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## **LMC Newsletter August 2010**

### **Chairman's Blog**

"I hope that everybody has managed to get some rest and relaxation in over the summer period in readiness for the challenges ahead.

All Practices have now been allocated into specific consortia and, having had the opportunity to speak at the last Swansea Clinical Developments Leads session, it is clear that whilst some Practices are a little apprehensive, the majority are keen and enthusiastic about partnership working across the health and social care sectors. The three Clinical Leads for General Practice – Drs Chris Johns (Swansea), Shimnaz Nazeer (Neath Port Talbot) and Sean Young (Bridgend) are certainly bringing a fresh approach and dynamism to many issues that continue to frustrate us in General Practice and have ensured the LMC is engaged in developments at all opportunities.

I get asked many questions about whether the English White Paper currently being debated/consulted on in England will cross over to Wales. All I can say is that, at present, there have been no moves from the Assembly to adopt a similar policy, but that there are some themes contained within the English White Paper that the Assembly are likely to want to look at. GPC Wales, which has robust input from myself, Ian Millington & Ashok Rayani as your reps, has effective working relationships with the Assembly, Deanery and RCGP Wales, so any proposals affecting the delivery of primary care in Wales will no doubt come to the committee at any early stage. You can be assured that as your reps we will continue to voice opinions from our colleagues across Morgannwg.

On that theme, GPC Wales recently sent out the "*Sort it in one call*" policy that has been developed following consistent complaints from patients and Ministers (in particular the Health Minister) about difficulties accessing GP appointments. Clearly patients are very satisfied with the care they get from their GP, but problems in getting to see the GP remain a key concern. GPC Wales believes that in this day and age, patients should be able to get an appointment organised when they first ring rather than having to ring back day after day. GPC Wales knows that the vast majority of Practices DO offer this service but there are some that don't, and this policy is simply suggesting that Practices review their systems to ensure that they work for the patients as well as the practice. We know that there is no "one solution fits all" and at a time of reducing Practice income/resources, Practices are working very hard to deliver effective care, but we believe that reviewing access arrangements will not only benefit patients but benefit Practices - as there will be fewer "upset" and "angry" patients complaining to the Practice staff which will improve morale. GPC Wales is mindful of the very real risk of policies being imposed on practices by politicians who remain exercised about this issue, but it is good to see that this policy of "*Sort it in one call*" has been warmly received by both the public and the Assembly. However, the Press Release went out before the LMCs in Wales had an opportunity to distribute the letter from the Chairman of GPC Wales to all GPs so the subject was all over the media before they had seen it. GPC Wales and the LMC apologise for this and will ensure that it will not happen again.

Before I sign off for this month, I would like to thank all those who have contacted me regarding Dr Millington's retirement from the role of deputy chairman and negotiator for GPC Wales. His wisdom, attention to detail (especially with respect to IT issues), and presence will be much missed within the negotiating team but at least he remains on the committee "chaperoning" us newer members of the negotiating team through. In addition, I am pleased to inform you that Dr Ashok Rayani was formally appointed to the role of GPC Wales negotiator – those of you that know Ashok will know that he will certainly not be afraid to voice those comments many think but don't wish to vocalise and also brings an unstoppable amount of energy and I look forward to his joining the Welsh team.

Please don't hesitate to contact any of the LMC officers or members regarding issues at any time – what affects you is important to us and, it is only from your contributions, opinions and comments that we can truly remain an effective negotiating body working on your behalf.

Regards

**Charlotte**

### **ABMU LHB Immunisation & Vaccination Strategy Implementation Group**

ABMU LHB has developed a strategy for raising immunisation levels across the whole of its area and this is now moving into the implementation phase. A Project Manager has been appointed to drive this forward and a Strategy Implementation Group has been set up with a membership that includes professional and managerial personnel from Primary Care, Secondary Care and Public Health. Morgannwg LMC has a representative on this Group.

At the meeting of the Strategy Implementation Group in June 2010, it was agreed to set up five Task & Finish Groups and the LMC has nominated a rep and a deputy to sit on each of these Groups:

- **Childhood Immunisations** – this is a complex area that will have two elements including information Requirements and Delivery. Initially, these elements will be progressed separately.
- **Vulnerable Groups** – this will include looked-after children, the homeless, travellers, migrant workers, asylum-seekers, refugees and others.
- **HPV** – this Group has met twice as there is pressure to get the vaccination campaign underway in schools at the start of the new school year. It is hoped that GPs will take up the Local Enhanced Service for those who miss the school campaign, although the advice from the Welsh Assembly Government could be clearer so a quick-reference version will be developed locally.
- **Seasonal Flu** – this has met and will be meeting again in early September 2010 to finalise the strategy for increasing uptake of the vaccine as the campaign gets underway.
- **Education & Training** – there is a “requirement” for all immunisers to have a half day of annual training, although shorter training sessions will be available for those who only immunise against flu. E-learning packages are being considered as a possible alternative for immunisers.

If you have any immunisation issues, the LMC can take these to the relevant Groups and beyond (e.g. the issue of short-dated MMR supplies and the potential for confusion has been raised with WAG).

### **MEDICAL CERTIFICATES & FORMS**

Hardly a month goes by without a GP or Practice Manager contacting the LMC Office for advice about a request from an organisation for a medical certificate or form to be signed by the GP. In almost every case, the work is not a GMS contractual requirement for the Practice so they can:

- Refuse to take on the work
- Do the work at the Practice's expense
- Charge a fee for the work.

Recent examples include:

#### **Medical Certificates for School Absence**

A GP in the Bridgend County Borough Council area was asked by the Educational Welfare Department for a medical certificate for a child who had failed to attend school. The letter to the GP contained the sentence “*any subsequent days off school following the surgery visit will not be authorised unless covered each individual day by a new medical certificate*”. The Secretary spoke to the Educational Welfare Department of Bridgend CBC during which he explained the position of GPs and it is likely that the procedure will be changed as a result of this discussion.

#### **Welsh Water Assist**

The Welsh Water Assist tariff exists to help low income families and individuals with relevant medical conditions by offering reduced water

charges. The patient will need to meet specific criteria to qualify and the form states:

*IMPORTANT- we need to understand why the medical condition results in increased water use. By asking your GP or practice nurse to sign, stamp and date this form we will not require an additional medical certificate or letter from your doctor.*

The Secretary has written to Welsh Water, has spoken to their Customer Service division and is awaiting a reply to his letter.

#### **Med3 Fit Notes and Secondary Care**

Morgannwg LMC has raised the issue of the failure of almost all doctors in Secondary Care in the ABMU LHB area to issue Med3 Fit Notes to patients when appropriate (e.g. after treatment for a fracture that will take many weeks to heal). All ABMU hospitals now have the MED3 Fit Note guidance and the certificates!

#### **In summary**

Many Practices have been penalised as a result of the Patient Experience Surveys because patients perceive (rightly or wrongly) that they cannot get an appointment to be seen when they are sick or believe that they are sick (the whole basis of the GMS Contract) yet requests such as the above (and many more) are using up valuable appointments. The LMC believes it is time for this to stop!

**Next LMC meetings:** Full Committee 7.00pm Tuesday 14 Sept 2010 - Towers Hotel, Jersey Marine  
Exec Committee 7.00pm Tuesday 12 October 2010 - venue TBA  
Full Committee 7.00pm Tuesday 09 Nov 2010 - Towers Hotel, Jersey Marine