

MORGANNWG LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

Suite G1, Britannic House, Llandarcy, Neath, SA10 6EL

Office Hours: 9.30a.m. – 1.00 p.m. Monday – Friday

Tel: 01792 815954

Fax: 01792 814938

LMC Newsletter June 2009

General Practice under Siege

General Practice in Wales is going through an extremely difficult time with the feeling that it is being denigrated, devalued and in danger of being destroyed by a number of factors that are mostly outside its control:

Workload - Practices are struggling to cope with the constant pressure of delivering General Medical Services in an area with high Disease Prevalence in the QOF domains (and almost certainly across the rest of Medicine) against a background of increasing expectations and demand. Add to this the dumping of work by Trusts onto Practices as a result of the new Waiting List rules, Secondary Care expectations that GPs will prescribe and monitor new or complex drugs and when patients are discharged at an early stage of recovery from hospital with inadequate communications to enable safe transfer of care and one starts to see the full extent of the problems. And then there is Swine Flu and a Measles Outbreak where the expectation by Public Health, LHBs and the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) is that Practices will respond almost immediately to these (which almost all have done).

Resources - The new GMS Contract delivered an increase in resources going into Practices but this has been more than off-set by the increase in expenses incurred in delivering the new agenda for General Practice. Add to this the early indications from the Patient Access Survey and it seems very likely that many Practices will be denied significant resources as a result of the opinions of a few patients.

Devaluation of General Practice - There is an ongoing failure to recognise the skills of the "Generalist" in determining the ability to deliver Enhanced Services and the need for evidence of additional training of GPs and their staff is almost universal.

Reorganisation - The WAG plans for the NHS in Wales are heavily dependent on the delivery of much more patient care in the community and this will rely heavily on General Practice. So, one asks why is there so little primary medical care experience amongst the Executive & Non-Executive Directors of the new Health Boards?

It is not a good starting point for the Reorganisation of the NHS in Wales when GPs who will play a key role have such low morale and feel under siege

— oOo —

The Measles Outbreak

The current Measles Outbreak is hardly surprising when one looks at the immunisation levels for MMR in many communities in the Morgannwg LMC area. However, some patients are re-considering their decision not to have their children immunised with two doses of MMR and most Practices are responding promptly to their requests for MMR. The three Local Health Boards in the Morgannwg LMC area are now offering a Measles Outbreak Local Enhanced Service that

enables Practices to be paid an Item of Service fee of £7-64 for giving:

- MMR2 for 6 to 15 years inclusive
- MMR1 & MMR2 for 16 to 24 years inclusive
- MMR1 & MMR2 for 25 to 39 years inclusive but only if MMR is requested

The LMC recognises that the LHBs are not able to make a payment for MMR1 or MMR2 for children up to the age of 5 years as these immunisations form part of the Additional Service for Vaccinations & Immunisations and so are covered under the GMS Contract.

Annual Conference of LMCs 2009

The Annual Conference of LMC 2009 was held in London on the 11th & 12th June. Conference opened with the traditional address by the Chairman of GPC UK, Dr Laurence Buckman, in which he highlighted the problems facing General Practice as a result of the intransigent attitude of the Department of Health and its effect on the other three nations of the UK. Clearly, some of the changes to the NHS in England with creeping privatisation could result in the destruction of General Practice as we know it (although Wales has not gone down this route). His speech was a rallying cry to the troops and it was well received.

Morgannwg LMC was well represented at the Conference and proposed / spoke to motions on:

- Appraisal in Wales - Congratulating the Deanery for this and the possible Revalidation pilot
- GP Education & Training - Calling for an uplift in the Trainer's Grant and an increase in the number of GP Trainees
- Sessional GPs - The need for LMCs and GPC to review their processes for the involvement of Sessional GPs to ensure that this increasing group of GPs are adequately represented
- Care Pathways - Acceptance that they are here to stay but that there must be an avoidance of increased workload for GPs and safeguards for patients in the referrals process
- Accreditation of GPs to deliver Enhanced Services - The failure to recognise the role and skills of the Generalist and the increasing demands for certificates of course attendance.

All the motions were well supported and will form part of the policy and direction of GPC UK.

Because of the devolution of Health to the four home nations, significant parts of the ACLMCs have little relevance to Wales, but what happens in England now could happen in Wales next!

Security Associated with Hard Disk Erasure / Disposal

All Practices should have received a letter from Mr Doug Rose, Regional Primary Care ICT Manager, BSC, re disposal of electronic equipment. Since that letter was issued, the University of Glamorgan has published the findings of a study where the University bought hard disks from a number of second-hand sources and had found that they contained extremely sensitive information including some medical information and some classified military information. All Practices are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure safe disposal of hard disks which may contain Personal Identifiable Information (PII) and that this is not an easy process. Methods include:

- Physical destruction of hard drives*
- Degaussing the hard disk*
- Secure erasure of the disk by overwriting with special software
- Encryption of the disk so that only memory erasure (and probably reformatting) is required

[NB: * means that the disk will then be unusable]

More information is available at the CESG website: <http://www.cctmark.gov.uk/CCTMAwards/tabid/54/Default.aspx>

Memory modules & removable media containing PII must also be erased/destroyed before disposal.

Ambulance Services

Mr Richard Lee, Regional Director, Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust, attended Morgannwg LMC in May 2009 and spoke frankly about the Ambulance Service and its problems. The LMC had expressed real concern about the Service's

response to requests for an Ambulance by GPs. Such calls are treated as urgent and the Ambulance Service will negotiate with the GP the maximum time in which they have to deliver the patient to hospital and they must respond to this within 15 minutes of the agreed time. Currently, the response time varies between 30% and 80% of calls meeting that target. The situation is not helped by Ambulances queuing in A&E car parks to off-load patients. He went on to discuss possible solutions including the introduction of an Advanced Medical Patient Despatch System which would allow more sensible prioritisation of ambulances for 999 and GP calls. This will be discussed with the LMC if the plans are accepted.

Referrals to see a Consultant Privately

A leaflet is available in all three LHB areas that advises a patient about the "rules" for mixing of NHS and private consultations and treatment. Basically, a patient who sees a Consultant privately and then opts for NHS treatment cannot assume that they will be treated by the same Consultant they saw privately because the LHB may not support this under the NHS, although an alternative Consultant is likely to be available locally.

New LMC Members

Morgannwg LMC is pleased to announce that the following GPs have been elected to the two vacancies in its Swansea Constituency:

- Dr Maryam Dehghani - Non-Contract Holder working mostly in the Swansea area.
- Dr William Andrew Bradley - Contract Holder in the Practice of Dr J W Rees & Partners at Fforestfach Medical Centre, Swansea.

Next LMC meetings: Full Committee 7.00pm Tuesday 14 July 2009 - Towers Hotel, Jersey Marine
Exec Committee 7.00pm Tuesday 11 August 2009 - Venue to be confirmed
Full Committee 7.00pm Tuesday 08 Sept 2009 - Towers Hotel, Jersey Marine