

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
May 2009**

A Tale of Two Viruses

First we have Swine Flu that seems to have started across the other side of the world with an outbreak in Mexico and then spread to many countries worldwide. There was inevitable media hype and the public mood was of worry that they may become infected. Action was demanded but the Pandemic Flu plans across the UK had already been set in motion. GPs responded with high vigilance for possible cases, and when a suspected case was found, GPs took swabs to test for the virus. Anti-virals were given where there was reasonable suspicion of infection. The good news to date is that none of the suspected cases of Swine Flu in Wales tested positive for H1N1 virus but it is probably only a matter of time before there are cases. The question as to how dangerous the H1N1 virus is when compared with seasonal flu and previous pandemic flu viruses is still unanswered. However, orders have been placed in the UK for H1N1 Flu Vaccine and this will be manufactured in addition to Winter Flu Vaccine. Demand for Flu Vaccine is likely to be high this winter! Then we have a Measles outbreak that seems to have started in West Wales but is now spreading much more widely with a significant number of cases in the Morgannwg LMC area. Some cases (mostly young children) have been hospitalised and some of these have been very ill. The death rate for Measles in children is known to be 1:500. MMR vaccine is readily available and is effective in preventing Measles (and also Mumps and Rubella). Many children have been fully immunised with two doses of MMR but a significant minority have not and remain vulnerable to Measles despite many attempts by GPs, Health Visitors and other Health Professionals to persuade parents of the benefits. Also, any community with low immunisation levels is at risk of a Measles outbreak with all the known health problems that can bring. So, why the difference between the public approach to two viral illnesses? It seems that parents fear MMR vaccine for their children following the discredited theory put forward by one doctor rather than the advice from almost every other expert on use of MMR to prevent Measles that may kill their child. What a pity it is so!

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Responding to requests for MMR uled demand at a time of genuine need? The Measles outbreak in the Morgannwg Most Practices will switch priorities and the LMC area and beyond is attracting publicity GPs and the staff (employed and attached) from various sides of the media and most of that form the Primary Health Care Team this publicity is well-informed. As a result, (PHCT) will provide additional MMR vaccination slots, some of which may need to be out many parents are likely to think again about giving permission for their child to have a full of school time to facilitate attendance. MMR immunisation course. Should they There are many examples in the past of agree to MMR immunisation for their child, it General Practice coming to the rescue with is likely that they will turn to their General effective and timely interventions by their Practitioner to provide it. So how will General PHCTs so let's ensure that they will still be Practice meet this unplanned and unsched- there to meet such needs in the future.

Working Together in the New NHS in Wales

Major changes to the NHS in Wales come in shortly with the formation of the new Local Health Boards. In the Morgannwg LMC area, there will be one with the catchy title of Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Local Health Board (ABMU LHB). The LMC is concerned that many in the new organisation may not fully understand the intricacies of the GMS Contract and the effect that some decisions can have on the incomes and even the pensions of General Practitioners. However, there is some good news in that Mr David Sissling, Chief Executive of the new LHB has a good understanding of General Practice and the GMS Contract which he acquired when in Northern Ireland and then in London and he is keen to meet with Morgannwg LMC. Change is inevitable and General Practice must be ready to respond to ensure that any plans for increasing delivery of services to patients in the community are realistic and adequately resourced. There is much interest in locality working and this has been given some impetus with Pandemic Flu planning that includes Practices working in zones as part of Business Continuity. Also, there is some interest in the Royal College of GPs document *The Next Steps - the Central Role of General Practice in the Evolving Health Service in Wales* and its emphasis on the need for General Practice to engage with the community to plan and deliver services. Maybe it is time for all GPs in the Morgannwg LMC area to consider who they can work with to ensure that the services they deliver will meet the needs of all patients in their area and that they will have the resources to meet these needs. It is up to us all to ensure that the voice of General Practice is heard above the clamour for reorganisation of community services coming from those who do not have the understanding or the experience of delivering such services.

Extended Hours DES

All three LHBs in the Morgannwg LMC area have reported patchy take-up of the Extended Hours DES in their area. There are pre-conditions for acceptance to provide the DES that include "doors open" from 08.00 to 18.30hrs (a Ministerial requirement) but the LHBs will consider applications from Practices if this requirement is met. The Extended Hours DES is to provide additional appointment slots to patients who may have problems accessing GMS during the "In-Hours" period. Practices who wish to provide the DES are expected to provide the normal mix of GMS but cannot use the sessions exclusively for the provision of other Enhanced Services such as Minor Surgery. If you are interested, please contact your LHB for more details / an application form.

Enhanced Services Uplift 2009/10

All three LHBs in the Morgannwg LMC area have agreed to pay a 1.75% increase for all LESs for 2009/10 in line with the increase for DESs and NESs announced by the WAG following the publication of the DDRB Report 2009.

Patients who may require Oxygen Therapy

All areas in the ABMU NHS Trust are now offering Assessment for all patient who may benefit from Oxygen Therapy. Referral pathways vary but GPs should not have to order Oxygen for patients except in very specific circumstances such as terminal care. LHBs are keen to advise GPs that Oxygen is charged at a daily rate according to the assessed need rather than according to the actual usage so there are huge cost savings to be made, particularly with Ambulatory Oxygen,

Introducing the Licence to Practise in 2009

All GPs should have received a letter and leaflet from the General Medical Council (GMC) reminding all doctors that they will need to consider one of the following options for the future:

- Registration with a Licence to Practise
- Registration without a Licence
- No longer registered

NB: This is your future so don't ignore it

Confirmation of Dynamising Factor for GP Pensions for 2008-2009

The Dynamising Factor for GP Pensions for 2008-2009 has been confirmed to be 6.5 per cent. Members of the NHS pension scheme who retired between 01 April 2008 and 28 February 2009 will receive a proportion of this amount dependent on the date of their retirement. Members retiring after 01 March 2009 will receive the full 6.5 per cent uplift as will members currently contributing to the scheme.

LMC Vacancies

Following recent resignations and retirements, Morgannwg LMC has vacancies for two Members in its Swansea Constituency. So, if you are a Contract-Holder in the Swansea LHB area or you are a Non-contract-Holder working in a Practice or Practices in the Swansea LHB area as a GP and you feel that you:

- Have something to say about General Practice
 - Want to be more involved in the making decisions that affect Practices locally
 - Can represent colleagues in the area
- please contact the LMC Office for details as to how you can become a member of the LMC.

**Next LMC meetings: Exec Committee 7.00pm Tuesday 09 June 2009 - Cwmfelin Medical Centre
Full Committee 7.00pm Tuesday 14 July 2009 - Towers Hotel, Jersey Marine
Exec Committee 7.00pm Tuesday 11 August 2009 - Venue to be confirmed**