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GPC meeting

The GPC met on 15 February 2007 and this newsletter provides a summary of the main items discussed.

Report on main negotiating issues

Please find attached (appendix 1) the written report from the GPC negotiators submitted to the committee ahead of the meeting and revised in the light of the updates given at the meeting.

BMA Council Working Group on NHS Reform

On the BMA website is a letter from Michael Wilks, chairman of the Representative Body, explaining the work that has been undertaken further to the detailed resolution of the 2006 ARM on the NHS reforms. The letter includes links to information about the BMA's campaigning activities, as well as offering an opportunity to submit comments to the BMA Council Working Group on NHS Reform, which is due to report in the late spring.

Formula Review Group

Friday 9 February saw the publication of the long-awaited report from the Formula Review Group *Review of the General Medical Services global sum formula*. This has been published for consultation

and we would encourage LMCs and GPs to read the review and respond. The results of the consultation will help inform discussions between the negotiating parties to determine if, how and when, the report's recommendations should be implemented. See the link below for the GPC's FAQ document, which provides important contextual information. The report and consultation response form can be found on the NHS Employers website. The deadline for responses is Friday 11 May 2007.

www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/Formulaconsultation?OpenDocument&Login
www.nhsemployers.org/primary/primary-891.cfm

Subcommittee Chairmen's Meeting, 18 January 2007

A subcommittee chairmen's meeting was held on 18 January 2007, in place of the scheduled GPC meeting. Discussion focused on four main areas:

- How the GPC can support GPs working under different types of contract, both now and in the future
- The funding of General Practice
- How best to promote the value of general practice to a wider audience
- The internal structure and working practices of the GPC

The outcomes of this meeting were discussed at the February GPC meeting, and work is currently being taken forward in each of these areas.

Referral management schemes

Representatives of the BMA met with the Secretary of State for Health's office and senior members of the Department of Health in early February to discuss a set of draft guiding principles for the establishment and objectives of referral management schemes, as put together by the GPC and CCSC prior to the meeting. The principles are intended to cover all such schemes including Clinical Assessment and Treatment Services (CATS), and Integrated Clinical Assessment and Treatment Services (ICATS). The committee discussed and supported the draft principles, which, when finalised, will be jointly issued by the BMA and Department of Health and circulated to LMCs accordingly.

Contract negotiations and DDRB update

There has been no further progress in agreeing with NHS Employers a negotiated uplift to the contract for 2007-08. It is anticipated that the DDRB will submit its report to the government in mid-February, though how soon it will be published following that remains to be seen.

Pensions

The GPC produced a guidance document on pensions dynamisation in December. This is available on the BMA website here: www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/faqspensionDF

Information Management and Technology (IM&T) update

Choose and Book

At the beginning of January 2007, processes were introduced to address the problem of patients calling the national Choose and Book Appointments Line (TAL) only to find an appointment slot was not available with their chosen provider. Where this occurs, TAL now forward the appointment request details to the relevant provider so the provider can liaise directly with the patient to arrange their appointment. This ensures an NHS trust meets its obligation to provide an appointment within the 13 week waiting target.

Where GP practice staff experience slot unavailability when attempting to book appointments using the Choose and Book system, we would now suggest staff give the patient a printed copy of their appointment request details and advise the patient to call TAL. If GP practice staff do not think it is appropriate to ask a particular patient to call TAL, the staff may offer to call TAL on behalf of the patient with the patient present.

This approach should ensure providers are aware of when appointments have not been able to be booked because sufficient slots are not available, and can manage their capacity accordingly.

In some circumstances where booking into an appointment is still not possible, providers may contact the GP practice to ask they forward the referral letter manually and cancel the appointment request on the Choose and Book system. This may occur where, for example, there is an ongoing technical issue affecting the interface between a provider PAS and the Choose and Book system.

DH are identifying those appointment requests that are cancelled as a result of the slot unavailability processes and will be advising PCTs of these numbers for individual GP Practices so the numbers can be included in the Choose and Book utilisation figures for the purpose of DES payments.

Confidentiality and Choose and Book

Concerns have recently been raised about some issues connected with confidentiality and Choose and Book. Dr Mark Davies, the National Clinical Lead for Choose and Book, has provided answers to these concerns which is attached as appendix 2.

GP2GP

The Joint General Practitioners IT committee (JGPITC) of the BMA's General Practitioners Committee (GPC) and the Royal College of GPs (RCGP) have endorsed the use of the version 1.1 Emis and InPS products for both 'same system' and 'inter system' GP2GP record transfers.

National Care Records Service

The Health Committee have announced that they are to undertake an inquiry into the electronic patient record. The terms of reference are given below. The GPC will be feeding into the BMA-wide response.

- What patient information will be held on the new local and national electronic record systems, including whether patients may prevent their personal data being placed on systems;
- Who will have access to locally and nationally held information and under what circumstances;
- Whether patient confidentiality can be adequately protected;
- How data held on the new systems can and should be used for purposes other than the delivery of care e.g. clinical research; and

- Current progress on the development of the NHS Care Records Service and the National Data Spine and why delivery of the new systems is up to 2 years behind schedule.

PCT funding of IT equipment

We are aware that some PCTs are refusing to fund the purchase of IT equipment and upgrades. We would ask to be kept informed when this occurs so that the JGPITC can assist. Details should be sent to arivett@bma.org.uk

Premises

The GPC recently had a wide-ranging and positive discussion with Partnerships for Health about the current problems with premises funding, and the need for an increase in funding to support development.

To inform further discussion, we are seeking examples of innovative local schemes to develop new premises or to redevelop existing premises.

If you have been involved in, or know of any innovative local schemes, please could you contact Andy Young at the GPC office – ayoung@bma.org.uk

CPD payment of £750 to GP trainers: 2006/07

The English Department of Health has confirmed that, following the recommendation by the Doctors' and Dentists' Review Body (DDRB), GP trainers will be receiving a £750 CPD payment in 2006/07 (as they did in 2005/06). However, unfortunately GP trainers have to date not yet received this money, despite calls from the GPC for this to be paid to them as soon as possible. The Health Department has so far refused to say when the payment will be made and has noted that it is for SHAs to decide how they manage this and to what timetable they make the payments. We find this unacceptable, and have therefore drawn this to the attention of the DDRB.

We will keep you informed of future developments. In the meantime we have encouraged LMCs to contact their SHAs directly to discuss when the funding will be made available, and so GP trainers may wish to contact their LMCs or even contact their SHA for details of when the payment will be made.

BMA locum fees guidance

The BMA's locum fees guidance is now available. This has been produced by the BMA's Professional Fees Committee, the GPC and the National Association of Sessional GPs. This is available on the website at: www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/locum.

The GPC next meets on 15 March 2007, and LMCs are invited to submit items for discussion. You may like to review these, beforehand, with the representatives in your area who serve on the GPC. The closing date for items is 7 March. It would be helpful if items could be emailed to Andrew Young at ayoung@bma.org.uk. You may also like to use the GPC's listservers to exchange views and ideas.

GPC News

GPC News is available via the Internet, via the BMA's web pages: <http://www.bma.org.uk>

LMCs are reminded that their regional representatives can provide more detailed information about the issues covered in GPC News, and other matters. Other members of the GPC would also be pleased to accept invitations to LMC meetings wherever possible. Their names and addresses are in the GPC Yearbook. The secretariat can also provide a written background brief if required, but it would be helpful to have such requests well in advance of your meetings.

Finally, if LMCs require assistance on local issues, they can also contact the BMA's local offices: addresses are on page 3 of the GPC's yearbook.

This newsletter has been sent to:

- Secretaries of LMCs and LMC offices
- Members of the GPC
- Members of GP registrars subcommittee
- Members of the sessional GPs subcommittee