

Contents	Page
A rational way forward for the NHS in England: BMA discussion document or 'green paper'	2
GPC meeting	1
IM&T update	2
Media coverage	3
Negotiations update	1
Performers list review	2
Report on main negotiating issues	1
VAT	3

GPC meeting

The GPC met on 17 May 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.

Negotiations update

The GPC received notification that the Access DES and Choice and Booking DES for England will be rolled over, largely unchanged, to 2007-08. Details still have to be finalised but guidance will be published in due course. LMCs are reminded that there is nothing to prevent them negotiating supplementary LESs for these areas that go beyond and improve the proposed DESs. This announcement does not alter the advice provided in *Safeguarding patient services*.

While we wait for new governments to settle in across the UK and for new ministers and the prime minister to assume their posts, there is little else to report on contract negotiations. The GPC negotiators are still seeking clarity on the NHS Employers' and the health departments' various negotiating mandates. There have been several informal conversations over the past few weeks to try to resolve outstanding issues and to help all sides prepare for resumed discussions.

A rational way forward for the NHS in England: BMA discussion document or 'green paper'

The BMA published its discussion paper 'A rational way forward for the NHS in England' on 8 May 2007, which was the culmination of work undertaken by a small working group of BMA Council, which had been formed following debate on NHS system reform at the ARM in 2006. The paper can be accessed online at the following address:

www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/rationalwayforward

The intention is to stimulate debate around the proposals made in the paper from those within and outside the medical profession; comments should be sent to caringforthenhs@bma.org.uk by 7 September 2007. There will also be detailed debate on the paper at the forthcoming ARM. The BMA intends to produce a more defined 'white paper' later in the year.

Despite being broadly supportive of some of the key themes running through the paper and its assessment of the current problems in the NHS, the GPC felt that it did not give enough credence to the role of general practice and that there was little detail behind a number of the proposals. It was agreed that a GPC critique of the discussion paper would be put together and, following some further discussion at the July meeting, it would be submitted to the BMA Council working group. In addition, a number of motions highlighting the way in which the committee wished the paper to be developed were passed.

IM&T update

GP2GP transfer

This project continues to make steady progress. Upgrades to support the large scale transfer of larger records (over 5MB) over the spine are scheduled for November. A rollout program is being discussed with a current proposed endpoint of year end 2008 for GP2GP to be implemented in every practice in England. GP2GP functionality in core GP systems is likely to be available throughout the UK but mechanisms for supporting the request and delivery processes will require close collaboration between the four countries.

SNOMED

The concept of a single coding system for the entirety of the NHS has moved forward with the formation of an international collaboration to support the further development of SNOMED.

Funding of IT equipment

We have been informed by an LMC that a practice whose PCT was refusing to fund the purchase of a scanner took the issue to the Family Health Services Appeal Unit (FHSAU) and won the case. The determination will be published on the FHSAU website in due course.

Performers list review

The Department of Health recently launched a consultation document on the future of the Performers List system. It can be found at:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Policyandguidance/Humanresourcesandtraining/Modernisingprofessionalregulation/DH_074409.

The GPC agreed there are major problems with unfairness arising from the operation of the current system of local performance lists and disciplinary procedures, and that the system should be organised on a UK basis. The committee will be responding to the consultation; members wishing to contribute to the response should email arivett@bma.org.uk no later than 1 June 2007.

VAT

The implementation of VAT on medical services took place on 1 May 2007. The BMA is planning to meet with HMRC to discuss implementation issues in due course. We would like to hear of any difficulties with implementation. These can be emailed to misom@bma.org.uk

Media coverage report

Please find attached (appendix 2) a GPC media coverage report prepared by the BMA's press office, detailing GPC media activity during the last few weeks.

The GPC next meets on 19 July 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 10 July. 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