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GPC meeting

The GPC met on 18 October 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.

Contract negotiations

Discussions have recently begun between the GPC, the government and NHS Employers on extended opening hours. The government's position on the issue is set out in the interim Darzi report. At this time we would stress that local GPs should not feel pressured into accepting any local arrangements that they do not feel are satisfactory. We will continue to discuss options for central arrangements but would stress that any centrally negotiated outcome should not preclude the operation of more favourable local solutions where these are available. Similarly, any local agreements should include an option to move, should GPs wish to do so, if a preferable national agreement is reached.

Defending general practice

Further to the discussion at the September meeting, the committee considered the development of its strategies to promote and development of general practice. A communications working groups is being set up which will be taking the strategy forward.

Lord Darzi's NHS Next Stage Review: interim report

The interim report of Lord Darzi's Next Stage Review was published on 4 October; the report can be accessed online at the following website address:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/dh_079077

A GPC summary of the report, covering the key points and giving more detail on those that are of particular interest to GPs can be found at appendix 2.

The Health Policy and Economic Research Unit (HPERU) will be coordinating the BMA's response to the report and a GPC submission will be made to HPERU on the basis of the comments made at the GPC meeting.

GPC survey of GP opinion 2007 – results

GPC members received a copy of the results of the GP opinion survey, which was published earlier this week. The full report can be found on the BMA website at:

www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/gpoptionsurvey1007

These results will help inform the committee's work over the coming year.

IT update

NHS Choices: Practice Profiles

As mentioned previously in editions of Negotiating News, Version 2 of the new online health information service, NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk), will be released shortly. The new release of the website will contain expanded primary care data and practices will have the facility to edit their own profile data on the site. Each practice has a profile page on the site that can be populated with details about individual members of staff, additional clinics and services, and practice videos. It will also include data from the Mori Patients' Surve, but not the details of the results for question nine on extended hours, and selected QOF indicators.

All practices will shortly receive an information pack that will offer the opportunity to take over the responsibility for editing their own data on NHS Choices via an individual secure login and password. The brochure will contain full details of the editing facility, with explanatory notes on how to complete the various text fields etc. Practices will be able to edit their information on a preview site, which will run in parallel with the public site before data on the two sites is integrated in early November.

This initiative provides a good opportunity for practices to ensure that their patients have access to comprehensive, accurate data concerning their facilities, but is not a contractual obligation and PCTs do not have editing rights if practices take up the opportunity to edit their own data.

The information packs contain all of the information practices need to edit their data, including a helpline telephone number.

GP educators' pay

The GPC will be meeting with GP educators' groups on 23 October 2007 to discuss possible ways forward to improve GP educators' pay. The GPC negotiated an improved pay scale for GP educators in 2004 for the 2003/04 period with the understanding that this would be uplifted on an annual basis in line with the DDRB's recommendations for other GPs. The GPC has been pushing for such an uplift, but unfortunately for a couple of years this was not forthcoming. The pay scale may therefore now need a revision to ensure that it recognises the work and commitment of these doctors.

Modernising Medical Careers

The findings and recommendations of the independent inquiry into modernising medical careers, *Aspiring to Excellence* (the Tooke Report) have now been published. This recommends an extension to GP training, including two years to be spent as a GP registrar following core specialty training. The full report can be accessed at www.consultationfinder.com/econsult/uploaddocs/Consult1/MMC_InquiryReport.pdf. The key parts relating to GP training are at pages 13, 68 to 69, 77, and 98 to 101. The BMA will be submitting a formal response by the deadline of 22 October, and the GPC will feed into that response.

Change of subcommittee name for GP registrars

The GPC has approved a recommendation from the GP Registrars subcommittee that its name be changed to the 'GP Trainees subcommittee. This reflects the eligibility of all GP trainees to stand for election to the subcommittee, not just those within the general practice part of their training.

Further information on the membership of the subcommittee can be found at: www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/gpregrep.

Pensions

Full details of the final agreement on changes to the NHS Pension Scheme in England and Wales can be found at www.bma.org.uk which includes a helpful summary of the key changes.

BMA partnership drafting service

Details about the new BMA partnership drafting service are attached at appendices 3 and 4.

As you will see in the flyer and the terms and conditions, the service is offered at a competitive fixed rate to BMA members. Practices will be asked to complete an initial questionnaire from which a first draft of an agreement will be prepared. The practice then will have an opportunity to discuss and comment on that draft before a final draft document is prepared.

The service is provided by Neal Hooper, a BMA lawyer, who can be contacted on 020 7383 6128 or email info.pds@bma.org.uk. Alternatively please contact askBMA on 0870 60 60 838.

Media coverage report

Please find attached (appendix 5) 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 15 November 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 November. 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