

# Barking and Havering LMC Newsletter

*For circulation to all GPs,  
GP non-Principals and  
Practice staff*

FEBRUARY 2005

*Dear Colleagues*

## RETIREMENT

Jackie Tiller is to retire at the end of February 2005 after more than 27 years working for Barking & Havering Local Medical Committee.

The LMC Chairman, will wish her an official farewell in the Committee room, Admin Block, St George's Hospital on Thursday, 17 February at around 1.30 p.m.

Please feel free to call in and say your goodbyes between 1.30 and 3.00 p.m.

Refreshments will be available.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

From January 2005, the Freedom of Information Act will oblige each Practice to respond to requests about the information that they hold and have recorded in any form and will create a right of access to that information. Practices must:

- i. have a publication scheme in place.
- ii. respond to individuals' requests for information

The Practice must comply with a request within 20 working days but where a fee is required\*, the deadline will be extended until the fee is paid

*\* any reasonable costs for copying, printing, postage and other disbursements.*

BMA advises that some types of information are exempt from the requirement to make them available. These include:

- Personal information, the handling and disclosure of which is regulated by the Data Protection Act 1998
- Information, where disclosure would harm the commercial interests of the public body or of a third party
- Information, where disclosure would harm the public good to an extent that is greater than the presumed public good of releasing it.

Medical Secretary: Madhu L. Pathak, MB BS DTM&H DA DCH LMSSA MRCGP  
Administrative Secretary: Mrs. Jacqueline Tiller

The Willows, St. George's Hospital, 117 Suttons Lane, Hornchurch, RM12 6RS

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However, only the exempt part of any document can be withheld. The rest of the document must be released when requested.

*There is an online publication scheme tool available at: <http://www.foi.nhs.uk>.*

*The model publication scheme can be accessed on the Information Commissioner's website:*

*<http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/>*

### **TIDYING UP of QoF data**

Practices should remember that prevalence factors that exist on 14 February 2005 will be used as the prevalence factors in calculating the year's payments. The calculation of the prevalence factors that applied on 14 February 2005 will not take place until 31 March 2005. The data are collected for automated practices on 14 March allowing practices to bring all data up to date. However, we strongly suggest that practices should not leave the tidying up of data to the last minute and should begin the process as early as possible.

Further information is available in the 'Focus on QMAS':

[www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/FocusQMAS1004](http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/FocusQMAS1004)

### **QoF and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**

The GPC is aware that in England, PCTs are receiving a number of requests to release practices' aspiration points, and interim achievement results following QOF visits. Currently there is confusion among PCTs and

Practices about what information they need to make available under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The GPC has agreed with the Department of Health that where all the information was formally recorded with the PCT, and is available in complete form, as is the case with aspiration payments, then this should be released under the Freedom of Information Act. However, there is reservation about interim achievement results being released, especially given that not all QOF visits have been completed and the accompanying guidance that should go with achievement results has not yet been agreed.

*Further advice is being sought and NHS Employers will be issuing guidance to PCTs about how to respond to FOIA requests shortly. The GPC will in turn issue guidance to GPs.*

### **COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT TRAINING**

Havering PCT is running a one-day course on Complaint Management for Investigating Officers, which includes some basic awareness training on the use of Root Cause Analysis and its tools and the role of PALS. Training is open to GP Practices in Havering. Dates are 04/03, 26/06, 14/07, 13/09.

*Please take advantage if your staff have not been trained and apply to Caroline Adams for a nomination form by fax on ☎465355.*

## JUNIOR MEMBERS FORUM 2005

LMC has received detail of the 2005 Forum, for doctors who are within 12 years of provisional registration and 11 years of full registration. The Forum will be held at Low Wood Hotel, Windermere over the weekend of 16 and 17 April. The subject will be "A time to die?" We have full detail and application form, which we can fax to you, if interested. Please ring 01708 465400.

## CHOOSE AND BOOK

You will remember that there was a brief reference to this initiative in an early LMC Newsletter. This is now to remind you that the National Programme for Information Technology (NPfIT) brings an exciting new initiative called Choose and Book; which offers patients the chance to book a convenient place, date and time for their initial hospital appointment.

You are also advised that work is currently underway in **Havering PCT** on the Choose and Book Programme and its local implementation, with the following actions

- An awareness event, in March, is being co-ordinated for all GPs and their practice staff full details of which will shortly be communicated to all practices.
- Practices will be given the opportunity to have a demonstration of how the new booking software will work.
- Questionnaires are being distributed to assess training needs of all staff
- Arrangements are in hand to start shortly with a phased roll out of the implementation programme to all Havering practices, again full details will be communicated directly to each practice.

- The PCTs Choose and Book Project Manager is available to support
- practices and clarify any issues and concerns about the programme.

If you would like any further information about the Choose & Book Programme in Havering PCT, please contact Sharon Fitzmaurice directly on 01708 46 5533.

## PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLING

Would you like to talk to a professional Counsellor? Do you need a supportive ear to listen and help you during some of life's challenges?

Havering PCT offers a Confidential, Open Access, Staff Counselling service. This service is available to all Havering PCT staff, GP Practices and their staff.

- Confidential means you book the session direct through the counselor. Attendance is strictly confidential (unless you are requesting time off during work hours to attend).
- Open Access means you can refer yourself, and you can request counseling for any issue, work related or personal.
- Counselling means the opportunity to talk through the issue face to face with a qualified Counsellor, who is independent of the Trust.

To request a session, contact Gillian Chester between the hours of 9 – 5 Monday to Friday on 01277 221 294 or 07810 771830.

You may be asked to leave your details on an answerphone. Gillian will call you back to arrange a date and time to meet.

You can see Gillian at her private practice in Brentwood.

Please note: the Counsellor does not travel to St. George's Hospital. She can see you at her practice in Brentwood.

#### **PGEA PAYMENTS 2003-2004**

The LMC has been enquiring on your behalf the payment of PGEA is still due, on the basis that payments have been paid in arrears.

Peter Blessington from NEL FHS Services agreed in January 2005 to make a search of four individual GP records to determine whether the GPs had been paid PGEA, for every year since its introduction in April 1990. He demonstrated that the four GPs selected have been paid on a quarterly basis from the time that they first became eligible to the date that PGEA ceased to exist.

*Any GP who feels that an error may have been made in payment of their PGEA can contact Peter Blessington on 020 7655 6635 and the matter will be investigated.*

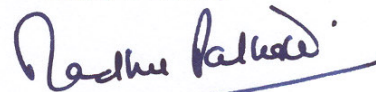
#### **SUTURE REMOVAL - BARKING & DAGENHAM PCT**

We are aware that a number of patients have been sent back from the Walk-in Centre when they have attended for suture removal without making prior arrangement. On further discussion with the PCT, the advice is

*Until an enhanced service is in place, simple suture removal can be undertaken at the Upney Lane Walk In Centre. Patients should be referred using the GP Access referral route to ensure that patients are seen by appointment and when a suitable member of staff is available."*

*With Best Wishes*

Yours sincerely

  
Madhu Pathak