

# NORFOLK LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

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## NEWSLETTER February 2003

### The New GP Contract - "A Quick Guide" attached

**Important:** The Norfolk New Contract Roadshow scheduled for **11th March** will now be held at **The George Hotel, Market Place, Swaffham** and not EcoTech as originally announced. The Norwich Roadshow remains at **Dunston Hall on the 18th.**

#### Tamoxifen vs Anastrozole

We try and steer clear of prescribing issues in this flyer but we have had a request from the Therapeutics Advisory Group to ask GPs if they have noticed any of their patients being switched from tamoxifen to anastrozole (Arimidex) by the hospital. The latter is trendy and expensive but TAG believes there is no evidence of its superiority.

#### WAX

This one's for the Luddites amongst you (the author of this piece latterly amongst their number!) WAX is an NHS net-based information service for Norfolk, hosted by Eastern Support Services. If you don't already use it check it out. Your surgery computer should be able to access it on [www.knowledgenorfolk.nhs.uk/WAX](http://www.knowledgenorfolk.nhs.uk/WAX). Give it a go!

#### Day Case Cancellations

Just a supplementary note about normotensive patients referred to the NNUH who are cancelled at the pre-op assessment stage for high recorded blood pressure. We've had very helpful replies from both David Ralphs and Iain Brooksby who both share our frustrations. However, often the nurse or doctor having no knowledge of previous measurements have no alternative.

The message is that whenever GPs refer patients who may end up having an anaesthetic it's a good idea to mention a recent blood pressure measurement in the referral.

#### SS Med1 Forms

As you know these are the forms GPs are asked to complete on behalf of patients going into residential or nursing care and for which they receive a fee via the Collaborative Arrangements.

This is fair enough but we are receiving reports that some Norfolk Social Service staff are asking for SS Med1s for patients just attending day care, which we believe is inappropriate.

If the patient is well enough for day care s/he can provide the information needed for day care staff. Please let the office know if you are asked to do this as we are currently in discussion with Norfolk Social Services over this issue.

#### Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital

A couple of items:

Firstly - there are plans by the hospital to reintroduce the GP Bulletin. Many of you may fondly remember this pamphlet, usually with a photo of a consultant receiving an award on the front page. Nevertheless The LMC felt it was a useful publication and has suggested we ask constituents for ideas about the topics and areas that they would like to see included.

Secondly - we are pressing ahead with an informal LMC-Consultants liaison group, which we hope will allow areas of clinical concern to be raised outside the commissioning process. If any GP has questions or problems which could usefully be raised with the consultants please direct them to the Office.

#### Childminders & Ofsted

Please note that the BMA and Ofsted have recently agreed on a revised health declaration booklet for child minding applicants. The revised booklet makes it clear at the beginning that the applicant should pay any fee that his or her doctor requires for this service. The BMA's suggested fee for GPs completing this form is £60 (based on an average of 35 minutes to complete the form)

#### Pharmacy and Dispensing Applications

Despite vociferous representations by the LMC, membership of the new pan-Norfolk Pharmacy & Dispensing Committee, which is responsible for considering and deciding upon dispensing and community pharmacy applications, includes individuals who have pharmacy and PCT management backgrounds - which was not the case with the previous NHA Committee which consisted of Non-executive lay members.

It is claimed that all PCTs support this situation but we believe that this agreement is not unanimous. The Local Pharmacy Committee has also expressed reservations at the make up of this Committee.

If you believe that these important decisions should be made by knowledgeable lay members only (as the LMC believes should be the case) please urgently inform any GP who is a member of your PCT Board.

This is particularly important in the light of the flood of applications that are being received following the publication of the OFT Report into Control of Entry Regulations for Community Pharmacy.

**Dispensing Doctors:** We are still awaiting guidance on how the OFT Report could affect your dispensing. In the meantime we have been notified of three applications from pharmacists to open up in dispensing areas during February alone. Please be proactive and start to think what you would do if an application was received to open a pharmacy in your area. This is a very real possibility.

#### What doctors can and should disclose to life and health protection insurance companies

Doctors and insurers have supported a new guidance about the exchange of medical information between health professionals and life and health insurance companies which includes revealing patients' sexual history, lifestyle issues, patients rights. The guidelines are available on the BMA website [www.bma.org.uk](http://www.bma.org.uk) or on the ABI website, [www.abi.org.uk](http://www.abi.org.uk).

#### Valuation of Premises

The LMC office is receiving reports of the District Valuer questioning the valuation of consulting rooms

(other than at ground floor) that do not have lift access. In Kent there are reports of the DV automatically reducing valuations by 25% for all upper floors that do not have an adequate lift - quoting the Disability Discrimination Act in respect of not only patients but also practice staff. We gather this is entirely inappropriate and would welcome evidence if it is becoming widespread in Norfolk.

#### Sickness Cover

Don't forget if you have a doctor on sick leave you can apply under Paragraph 48 of the Red Book whereby:

*"in addition to receiving the full normal remuneration, the sick doctor, subject to the provisions of this Scheme, will be eligible to receive a special payment designed to reimburse him or her at least in large part for the cost of a locum or other deputy from outside the practice he or she has necessarily engaged to look after his or her patients".*

Note: whilst these extra funds are very welcome the Red Book is absolutely clear that the money cannot be used to reimburse "partners" for covering for the absent doctor - even when - as we all know - locum cover can be as rare as hen's teeth. We have argued that this is a ridiculous restriction but to no avail.

#### Referral of Lipomas and other Cutaneous Lesions to the NNUH

Just a reminder for GPs, following some correspondence that, within the N&N Trust, many cutaneous but small, benign and cosmetic lesions which "could" be dealt with by surgical excision should not be referred, following an agreement with the Trust and the PCT commissioners. Furthermore, referral should only be made to dermatology for these conditions where the GP considers there to be diagnostic doubt. If a benign lesion is large and/or causing specific symptoms such as pain and discomfort, it is reasonable to refer for surgery.

#### THE GENERAL PRACTITIONERS COMMITTEE

**Are you interested in getting involved?  
Have you a vision of how general practice should be run?**

Nominations are sought for the election of voting members of the GPC as regional representative for Norfolk & Suffolk

For more information and/or a comprehensive election pack (including nomination form) contact the Norfolk LMC Office or log on to the general practitioner section of the BMA website (password is your BMA number) and click on "news section"

Nominations are required not later than 28th March 2003 - if an election is necessary this will take place between 25th April - 16th May.

## Appraisal

The LMC, through these columns, has regularly recommended GP appraisal so long as it is properly funded.

The official guidance says that it is a ToS requirement for GP principals in England "to participate in the appraisal process"

However, there is also a reciprocal requirement on PCTs to provide the necessary support (as highlighted in Nigel Crisps letter of 18th June 2002).

The DoH has confirmed that GPs will only be required to participate in appraisal when and if properly resourced and supported schemes are in place. Therefore please note that if your PCT has provided a "properly resourced and supported scheme" then it is part of your Terms of Service to undergo an appraisal.

## The Data Protection Act

A company calling itself **Data Protection Agency Services** with a registered office at Hyde, Cheshire, is writing to local practices. **Beware**, they are not **Data Protection** and on no account send them any money. Do, however, ensure that your practice is registered with **Data Protection** at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. [www.dataprotection.gov.uk](http://www.dataprotection.gov.uk).

## GMC Elections 2003

There will be elections to the GMC Council in 2003. As part of the GMC's reform programme a smaller Council of 35 members will take office on 1st July 2003. The GMC will hold an election for 19 elected medical members of the Council, the Privy Council will nominate 14 lay members and the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and the Council of Heads of Medical Schools will each appoint one medical member. For further information please see [www.gmc-uk.org/election](http://www.gmc-uk.org/election)

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### Norfolk LMC - 2003-2006 Election Provisional Results:

Gt Yarmouth:        Dr A Penn  
                              2 vacancies

West Norfolk:     Dr B Duncan  
                              Dr E Vaughan Williams  
                              Dr M Skinner  
                              Dr I Hotchin  
                              Dr M Ahmed

Norwich: Dr C Francis  
                              Dr C Robinson  
                              Dr S Sambandan  
                              Dr N Morton

NP:                    Dr J Martin  
                              Dr P Harvey  
                              Dr A Latten  
                              Dr K Husk

Broadland: Election taking place  
North Norfolk:     Election taking place

Southern Norfolk   Dr S Brown  
                              Dr I Hume  
                              Dr R Lindner  
                              Dr M Belsham  
                              3 Vacancies