

# NORFOLK LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

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March 2007

## GPC - Post-DDRB Strategy

Following the decisions taken by the General Practitioners Committee at its meeting last week, the GPC negotiators and subcommittee chairs met yesterday to develop the committee's strategy further to the Doctors' and Dentists' Review Body recommendations and wider concerns about the state of general practice in the NHS.

Detailed work is underway to prepare guidance for GPs on cost-effective practice and advice on any actions they might consider undertaking. The subcommittee chairs have contributed significantly to the content of this guidance. There are important legal considerations which need to be taken into account in this guidance to ensure that it complies with the legislation governing trade unions and employment. We have therefore been working closely with the BMA's legal department and taking advice from a leading QC to ensure that the guidance is as legally watertight as possible. However, LMCs and GPs will need to be aware that, because of the law covering industrial action, we are constrained in what we can advise and the guidance will need to be carefully worded. We hope that the guidance will be finalised before Easter and issued to GPs.

The publication of this guidance is part of a much wider strategy which we have been developing with the subcommittee chairs. A further strand is that we have decided that the morning of the next GPC meeting - Thursday 19 April - will now be a joint GPC/LMC Secretaries meeting to discuss the strategy with LMC Secretaries.

Finally we also decided at our meeting yesterday to conduct a survey of GPs' views on a wide range of issues around the current situation of general practice, together with the state of the wider NHS. We will be working over the next few weeks to decide on the exact range and content of the survey and the likely timescale.

Hamish Meldrum  
Chairman, GPC  
23 March 2007

## Formula Review Group Consultation

I feel quite ambivalent asking you to input into this consultation which you can access through the BMA website, together with the report and the GPC's FAQs. The deadline is Friday 11th May 2007. On the one hand, the issue may seem extremely technical and you may feel it would be impossible to use local evidence, particularly if it is anecdotal, to achieve any change to the science; on the other hand, it is clearly an issue that will affect the pocket and the practice of every GP in the land so, if you do have your two pennyworth to put in, that would probably be a very good idea.

It may well be the case that there is no completely correct answer and that the suggested formula is as good as you can get. If you need, or want, a national contract it would be very hard to do that without a national formula.

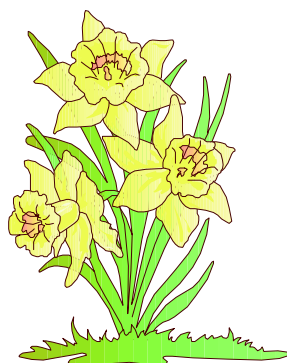
You may feel that the formula itself is reasonably evidenced based, so the most likely area for variation will be how it is used by governments of different complexions: to caricature what might happen - whether funds flow to inner cities from the leafy shires, or in the opposite direction.

But, as I say, this will affect each and every one of you, so it is certainly worth looking at the site, thinking about the issues and sending in your thoughts. SRL

## The Mental Capacity Act 2005

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 for England and Wales will come into force in 2007. This act governs decision-making on behalf of adults, where they lose mental capacity at some point in their lives or where the incapacity condition has been present since birth. Although parts of the Act will be available from April 2007, including the introduction of the Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) service and guidance

on principles, assessing capacity and determining best interests, most of the Act will come into force in October 2007. The BMA Ethics Department have produced guidance for health professionals



on the Act available at <http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/mencapact05>.

This guidance gives a good overview of the Act however it is unlikely that it will impact significantly on GPs until October 2007 and through the BMA's Professional Fees Committee (PFC), work is ongoing to negotiate the associated fee for undertaking Court of Protection work. The GPC and the PFC will issue further guidance over the summer on the practicalities of completing the new Court of Protection assessment of capacity form which will replace the current CP3 medical certificate.

We're aware that many GPs have been told that they have to attend mandatory courses on the Mental Capacity Act 2005. There is no requirement on GPs to attend these courses but they may, of course, attend if they wish. Provided GPs continue to do any work associated with the Act with full understanding and within their capabilities as defined by the GMC, there should be no need for additional training.

## Article in Evening News about 'Cheap Drugs'

The LMC has heard from GPs who have had difficult and unnecessary consultations following an article in the Norwich Evening News about 'cheap drugs'.

The article included a reference to a patient said to have run into problems secondary to a switch to simvastatin from atorvastatin. It may be helpful for you to know that the paper did not mention that the patient had had a renal transplant and was on ciclosporin and it is known that there is a possibility of myositis with this combination (and indeed atorvastatin).

Obviously we all have our own views about the various drugs we prescribe but your Secretary is under the impression that there is no published evidence that switching patients' statins (so long as the dose is equivalent) is putting their lives at risk and that simvastatin has been around a long time and is very effective and safe; indeed he takes it himself and hopes to continue to for a very long time!

## Coroners' Service - Re-organisation of Districts

The King's Lynn and Norwich & Central Norfolk Coroner's Districts have now been formally amalgamated into the Greater Norfolk Coroners' District. The Coroner for the new district will be Mr William Armstrong. In terms of the day to day operation of the service there should be no material changes at this stage. Contact details are as follows:

Norwich Coroner's Office: 124 Barrack Street, NR3 1TL, Tel: 01603 664378/630915, Fax: 01603 665511

Greater Norfolk Coroner's Office, QEH, Gayton Road, King's Lynn, PE30 4ET, Tel: 01553 613478, Fax: 01553 613469

and for Waveney:

The Norfolk and Norwich Benevolent Medical Society has been giving financial help since 1786 to its members (and their dependents) in financial need. You may think you are unlikely ever to need the help of the Society but even today it still gives aid to members of all ages and their families. Due to the Society's Rules it is only able to help members. I would recommend any GP in Norfolk who is not a member to give serious consideration to joining.

Membership is open to doctors, practising in Norfolk, who have been registered for less than 25 years and is available at the low cost of £15 per year. Even if your personal circumstances suggest you are unlikely to need financial assistance in the future (and none of us know what the future may hold) you may nonetheless wish to be associated with this long established Society helping Norfolk doctors and their families.

If you wish to become a member further information and an application form is available at [www.nnbms.org.uk](http://www.nnbms.org.uk) or contact Philip Norton, Chief Executive NNBMS, Hansells, 13 The Close, Norwich NR1 4DS or E-mail [secretary@nnbms.org.uk](mailto:secretary@nnbms.org.uk) for Chris Hutchinson Hon Secretary, Tuckswold Surgery, Norwich. E-mail [chris.hutchinson@nhs.net](mailto:chris.hutchinson@nhs.net)

#### BMA Conferences

"Who is leading service change in long term conditions", BMA House, 22nd May 2007

"Make the Most of Being a Salaried GP"  
BMA House, 23rd April 2006

[www.bma.org.uk/conferences](http://www.bma.org.uk/conferences) or contact the Conference Unit on 020 7387 6137/6605

#### Negative Publicity "Comparative Figures provided by Accountants"

You will be aware that at least some of the anti-GP publicity that has been flying about has related to GP income. AISMA is either a group of accountants or an umbrella organisation for medical accountants - I am not entirely clear which. This body publicised the notorious figures suggesting that GPs earn up to £250k. Of course AISMA accountants' income comes from the practices that they serve and publicising this information, even if it is correct, is hardly in practices' best interests. Practices may wish to discuss with their accountants what they feel would be appropriate behaviour by those that they trust to serve them and, no doubt, trust to keep their practices' information confidential.

I have just seen my own practices' comparator figures for our year ending 9.2006 draft accounts; the "AISMA Benchmark" comparator figures for 2005/2006 (which, I assume, must be April to March) per full time equity partner is shown as £123k. My understanding from a recent meeting with one of the Negotiators is that the most up to date and accurate figure from the Technical Steering Committee, which receives information from the Inland Revenue about ALL practices, is around £100k. So either AISMA has got its figures wrong or it looks after "richer" practices and, perhaps, wishes to publicise these figures in the hope that those earning more normal

#### Norfolk & Norwich Benevolent Medical Society

amounts may feel that by changing to an AISMA accountant they will magically achieve a higher income.

Not only does giving the impression of inflated incomes do the profession as a whole no good at all, it may well encourage dissatisfaction among partners who feel that a practice could and should be earning more than it can. SRL

#### Disaster Planning and Practice Buddying

Currently there is a vogue for disaster planning - perhaps catalysed by thoughts of a possible 'flu pandemic. One thing that might be worth thinking about is whether it is feasible for some sort of advance agreement with neighbouring practices, to the effect that if a pandemic was declared one practice would shut (to try and keep its doctors and staff healthy) with the other practice seeing all the patients until they succumb. Then the other practice takes over - rather than both practices falling over at the same time. Interesting!

#### Advertisement

Norfolk Education Update and Review of Neurology (NEURON) - "A symptom-based approach to common neurological problems".  
Tuesday 8th May 1.15 - 5.00 pm Barnham Broom

1.15 - 2.00	Lunch
2.00 - 2.05	Introduction, Aims, Objectives
2.05 - 2.45	What's new in MS (Dr M Lee)
2.45 - 3.25	A problem-based approach to the neurological examination in primary care (Dr D Dick)
3.25 - 4.00	Tea
4.00 - 4.40	Common conundrums in the management of Parkinson's Disease (Dr P Worth)
4.40 - 5.00	Summary & Closing Remarks

If you would like to attend please email only to: [NEURON@talktalk.net](mailto:NEURON@talktalk.net) giving your name, job title and contact number

#### Advertisement

#### GP LOCUM Required for

Six months      Nine sessions per week  
Nine GP Practice      EMIS LV System

Please apply in writing enclosing CV and references to:  
Michael Barnes, Practice Manager  
Attleborough Surgeries, Station Road  
Attleborough Norfolk NR17 2AS  
or by email to [michael.barnes@nhs.net](mailto:michael.barnes@nhs.net)

#### Salaried and Self Employed Doctors - working in WAVENEY

The LMC office is finding this a hard-to-reach group. We have no certain way of knowing who they are and where they work or live. Suffolk Support Services has agreed that, from now, on it will pass on our contact details when a salaried or freelance locum GP goes on the Waveney Performers' List. However, it will still be up to the doctor concerned to get in touch with the LMC office with their contact details so that they

receive regular mailings and communications from the LMC.

However, we still will need your help to identify those GPs already working in Waveney Practices. Please ask any salaried or freelance doctors working in your practice if they receive this flyer *at their home address*. If they do not please get them to contact us. We believe it is not only to the benefit of the doctor but also to the practices they work for that they should be up to date on national and local issues - so your help would be extremely welcome.

PS If you are one of the Waveney Salaried Docs or Self Employed Locums that does receive this publication perhaps you would check with your colleagues and remind them to get in touch if they have not already done so.

#### Advertisement

**BRADWELL: East Norfolk, Southern Broads & Coastal area**

We are looking for a new partner to join our flexible, enthusiastic team

- Full time partner but would consider a salaried position or job share
- High standards of clinical excellence
- Friendly & Committed GMS Practice
- EMIS LV computer system (paper-light)
- 4 Partner Practice
- High Scoring QOF
- Aiming for Training Practice Status August 2007
- No OOH but sessions available
- Full complement of practice and attached staff

Formal visits welcome. For more information or applicants with CV to: Vanessa Cordingley, PM, Falklands Surgery, Falkland Way, Bradwell, Gt Yarmouth, Norfolk NR31 8RW. Tel: 01493 442233 or [vanessa.cordingley@nhs.net](mailto:vanessa.cordingley@nhs.net)

#### The Knowledge Management Website

At a recent meeting of the Waveney Alliance it became apparent that many Waveney doctors weren't aware of this website. Those that were extolled its virtues - claiming it to be a mine of useful information, referral forms etc.

Knowledge Management is accessible to all healthcare sites with an N3 connection <http://www.knowledgenorfolk.nhs.uk>. Amongst other things the site includes referral forms that integrate with GP clinical systems. Currently commissioned for Norfolk PCT and the previous Great Yarmouth PCT (who can also access the site via WWW), discussions are planned to consider future users and developments. For questions and feedback please contact the Site Manager - [sarah.dutton@norfolk.nhs.uk](mailto:sarah.dutton@norfolk.nhs.uk).

#### Advertisement

#### Doctors available for work

Dr Adrian Munn  
106 Henry Doulton Drive, Tooting, London SW17 6DF, 07852 289702 or [ademunn@hotmail.com](mailto:ademunn@hotmail.com)  
Available from 16th April 2007

Dr Fiona Munn (McNab)  
106 Henry Doulton Drive, Tooting London SW17 6DF, 07944 206314 or [fimacnab@hotmail.com](mailto:fimacnab@hotmail.com)  
Available from 1st May 2007

