

NORFOLK LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

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Wishing everyone a Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year

Ethical Dilemmas

Apparently the NHS Appraisal Toolkit paperwork now contains a section on "Ethical Dilemmas". It may be that there are some issues that we have grown used to but to which attention could be drawn by entering them there. Those of you who are Appraisers will know better than I do whether that might be effective in achieving change.

An example came up in a recent LMC meeting: dental emergencies out-of-hours (and sometimes in-hours) where what is needed is a dental opinion/inspection, but this appears to be unavailable. To correct the situation would need change by the out of hours services and by those who commission them but are not funding the service properly. The result is pressure by patients on doctors, in clinical situations for which they are untrained, to take decisions and, often, to prescribe.

So, if you have ever felt pressurised into prescribing for what you are pretty sure is a dental problem and, therefore, outside your competence, either in hours, or out of hours, do think when you are completing your appraisal forms whether that is an example of the sort of thing that should go into that inviting space.

Is your LMC supporting you?

The Secretary and PEO recently attended the Conference for LMC Secretaries where a presentation was given on some work done elsewhere in the country. Apparently extreme dissatisfaction among non-principals had been reported with employment law frequently ignored by their employing practices, no contracts, no pay increases for three years, no maternity or sickness provision, no time off for education and a "victim mentality" - even fearing to seek advice. Some apparently stated that they hadn't been to the LMC with their grievance because they felt the LMC was formed for and of principal GPs. These concerns are apparently credible because in some parts of the country hardly any partnerships are being advertised and salaried jobs are receiving 80 to 100 applications.

I have to say that I do not recognise these scenarios in Norfolk or GtY&W but it may be that I lack insight. If you feel that you, or someone you know, is being exploited in a practice then please let the LMC office know. It will not help the future of general practice if this sort of thing really goes on. SRL

Vaccinations and Immunisations: some interesting issues

The Secretary recently attended a Norfolk Clinical Governance meeting where he learned that a few practices are not finding it cost effective to provide the vaccinations and immunisations additional service. Quite properly, they have informed the PCT; their global sum has been reduced by 2%. The PCT then arranges for the service to be provided by someone else. There are some

concerns that, while travel immunisations are being taken up, (because the patients make sure they get them), some of the others (non 'flu/non-childhood) may not be being done. The patient's practice is unlikely to seek them out - having contracted out - and it may be that no one else is looking for them either.

On a related matter: Norfolk PCT is concerned that some practices are *not* giving the travel immunisations that they should (under their GMS or PMS contract) but are, instead, sending patients to a travel clinic - but are not declaring this - so their global sum is not reduced as it should be. Also there has been some confusion about whether some practice nurse time can be charged to the patient as "private work" - when a mixture of NHS and private travel immunisations are given.

If you recognise any of these scenarios in your own practice then please take the appropriate action.

Verbal Consent for Release of Medical Reports

We are hearing about banks and insurance firms in some areas asking GPs to release an extract from their patients' medical records based on a verbal recording of consent. In the note to the GP they say something along the lines of "as part of the telephone process we have explained your patient's rights and their options under the Act. Confirmation of their consent and whether they wish to see the report before it is released to us is also recorded in the attached document, a copy of which has been sent to the customer". GPs should **not** release patient medical records based on this verbal consent agreement. For details of the joint BMA Ethics and ABI Guidance on this please contact the LMC.

NHS Choices: Practice Profiles

We understand that some 3,250 practices have now registered with NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk) as part of the initiative to improve and extend the level of information about primary care data on the site and over 700 have published their data in the new format. However, in some areas practices have not received their explanatory packs. If any Norfolk or Great Yarmouth & Waveney Practice finds itself in this situation please contact the office for a copy. Further help can be obtained from NHS Choices helpdesk on 0845 6504 865.

"The Interface between the NHS and Private Treatment"

Recent media headlines have highlighted problems around the NHS/private care interface. Similarly a frequently asked question to the LMC office is whether practices may charge for making private referrals. The BMA Ethics Department has produced this very helpful guidance -

copies of which are available from the LMC office or from the LMC website, norfolkmlc.org.uk.

L M C Housekeeping:

Since the LMC's remit altered to include the interests of the Waveney doctors the Committee has experimented with the format of its monthly

meetings to reflect the differing agendas of the two PCT areas it covers. Members from the Norfolk and GtY&Waveney constituencies have met separately to discuss issues arising from their respective health economies, coming together for the second part of the LMC meeting to look at common issues - as well as those applying to the wider profession. At the December LMC these arrangements were reviewed and the general opinion was that they had worked well and should be continued.

Re- Advertisement

Half-time Salaried GP with a view to Partnership, Sprowston, Norwich

- ▶ Retirement Vacancy
- ▶ 5500 Patients
- ▶ Teaching Practice
- ▶ MRCGP or other postgraduate training
- ▶ Ability to be flexible and fit in with current working pattern
- ▶ Closing Date: 23 January 2008
- ▶

Email for enquiries to: thomasina.neil@nhs.net or willowwood.surgery@nhs.net or telephone 01603 425608. Applications to be in writing to Thomasina Neil, Practice Manager, Willow Wood Surgery, Sprowston Primary Care Centre, Norwich, NR7 8TT

Advertisement

Idyllic North Norfolk

We are a rural 5 partner dispensing PMS practice (4.5 TE) based in a market town in North Norfolk. List size 7,500. Due to retirement and emigration we are looking to attract 2 partners from 1st September 2008, both working seven sessions with a share of Friday afternoons.

We are a teaching practice with an extensive track record at all levels from undergraduate to postgraduate. No OOH, paperlight records, local cottage hospital.

The team ethic is to "be happy" and we strike a



good work-life balance whilst achieving maximum QOF points. If you share our ethos we would very much like to hear from you.

For an information pack please contact the Practice Manager, Graham Dodd, The Paston Surgery, North Walsham, on 01692 502855, email graham.dodd@nhs.net. Closing date is 01.02.07. www.pastonsurgery.nhs.uk