

Stockport Local Medical Committee

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October news letter

GP colleagues now we are well into autumn, I can update you all on developments within General Practice since my last newsletter in July and I have to say my patience is being tested to the limit with regards several issues.

Prescribing incentive scheme money payments, following the letter from Richard Popplewell of the 21st September 2006, have been frozen until at least the next financial year. This is a unilateral decision taken by Stockport PCT without formal discussion with Stockport LMC as cash saving exercise to balance PCT financial books for 2006/7. These are our hard earned monies which we are entitled to receive, I am aware that this issue has caused anger and disbelief amongst many of you and I can assure you I fell the same and will endeavour to negotiate with Stockport PCT for the immediate release of these monies when requested by practices. I am amazed that Stockport PCT takes this approach when they rely on our support, which has been given by many practices, for the development of practice based commissioning. I would recommend that you all send letters of protest to Richard Popplewell and the new chairman of the PCT board, Michael Greenwood, forthwith.

There has now been some progress with regards eligibility for minor surgery payments. The PCT is now in the process of devising a minor surgery template which incorporates those procedures where a payment is clinically indicated and therefore warrants a payment under the Directed Enhanced Service, your LMC has, as I speak not agreed the details of this template but will in due course detail you all of developments. We hope to have this issue resolved before the year end.

Practice based commissioning (PBC) continues to progress, my main concern is that we receive all payments for the hard work we have all undertaken. Not only have there been 3 different PBC payments due to practices since the beginning of the year with another *progress* payment due shortly, but there are also a variety of Enhanced Service payments which practices are entitled to. With this in mind Paul Stevens, has listed all the enhanced services currently active in Stockport on the LMC Website - www.stockport-lmc.org.uk.

Investors in People (IIP) monies are to be terminated by Stockport PCT as from 31st March 2007, many practices have worked hard to obtain this award, and in my opinion this is another example of monies lost to General Practice. It is a further illustration of the PCT's double standards that they continue to fund the award for their organisation but withdraw the funding from General Practice. I would urge all practices in receipt of IIP monies to

again write to Richard Popplewell and the new chairman Michael Greenwood expressing your concerns about further disinvestment in General Practice when, at the same time, the PCT is relying on General Practice's support for the success of PBC.

Nationally there are concerns about continuing involvement in the Access Directed Enhanced Service following the imposition of inappropriate additional questions in the Patient Experience Survey by the Government. Paul has written about this issue on the website and I encourage you all to read and act according to how you interpret the other wider issues. In summary it appears the government is determined to manipulate public opinion on access to General Practice Services and encouraging patients to demand early morning, late evening and weekend surgeries without any commitment to additional funding. The Government still believe we have been overpaid on the contract and this is an avenue where they will be able to claw back monies via unfunded additional core demands.

The GPC, our national negotiators are in my opinion also very aware of other issues especially pensions, the Government is trying to reduce the amount we earn in our pensions as they feel we have over performed on the new contract over the last 2 years. They want to renegotiate the original contract and I fully support the approach of, Hamish Meldrum, our chief negotiator who stated as long ago as the LMC conference in June 2006 that they will use every channel available, including legal action if this Government reneges on our pension payments.

The conclusion is that the loss of some monies on the Access DES will demonstrate to the Government that we are not prepared to allow further alterations to our negotiated 2004 contract. We should remember that the negotiators allowed increased work this year to be introduced into the QoF this year to draw a line under the over performance debate.

The message is clear no further work without additional resources!

These are worrying times for General Practice and I think it is vital we remain united in order that we, as Stockport GPs, can continue to deliver a comprehensive primary care service to the patients of Stockport. Otherwise outside providers will cherry pick the profitable areas leaving us to manage the costly chronic diseases with little resource.

D Gilbert
Chairman