

## New Chairman for LMC

The new LMC committee met for the first time on 1 April. We thanked Sean King for his cheerful and calm influence as Chairman for the past eight years, steering the LMC through numerous NHS reorganisations and government initiatives. Peter Williams from Bakewell has agreed to take on this role; he will be supported by the other LMC officers – John Grenville as Secretary, Peter Holden as Treasurer and Deputy Chairs John Ashcroft and Rachel Tinker.

## Patient identification

Practices in the County should be aware of a Significant Event involving the misidentification of a patient and his subsequent death when he was prescribed a medication to which he was known to be allergic. City practices may be less aware.

The County PCT has issued best practice guidelines regarding the identification of patients, which involve either using the NHS number or using three separate identifiers, namely full name, address and date of birth.

All prescribers have a professional duty to ensure that their prescribing is safe. Clearly identifying a patient correctly is a fundamental step. I strongly advise prescribers to follow the best practice guidelines regarding patient identification at the point of prescribing in all cases where they are not absolutely 100% certain that they personally know the patient.

Correct identification is the first step but prescribers should also take care to enquire of all patients regarding allergies, previous adverse reactions, other current medication (including over the counter) and existing or inter-current medical conditions whenever the drug prescribed has the potential for causing harm.

## GP and Pharmacy guides

NHS Employers, the General Practitioners Committee (GPC) and the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) have produced two guides to support GPs and community pharmacists in developing more effective working relationships. The guide to pharmacy for GPs is designed to increase awareness of the work of community pharma-

cies and to encourage joint working. You may also find it beneficial in educating trainee GPs about community pharmacy. The second guide provides an overview on general practice for community pharmacists.

The guides, on the work of community pharmacists and GPs, cover the following areas:

- the funding and contractual arrangements for pharmacists and GPs
- the range of clinical and administrative functions that each profession provides
- various staff roles and responsibilities
- training and qualifications
- the key national bodies
- where to get more information on each profession.

The two guides are available on-line only at the following link, along with a letter to GPs from NHS Employers, the PSNC and GPC, introducing the guides:

<http://www.nhsemployers.org/PayAndContracts/CommunityPharmacyContract/Pages/professional-relationships-guides.aspx>

## ATOS and requests for confirmation that home visits are required

Healthcare professionals employed by Atos Healthcare provide medical services to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

The regulations state that a claimant is required to attend for an examination when requested and if he does not he loses his benefit. If, however, he can show good cause for not having attended, his benefit may be continued. Reasons constituting good cause include the state of the claimant's health. A claimant who has not attended may ask his GP to confirm that he was unable to attend due to his state of health, but there is no obligation on a GP to respond to such a request and if he does so, he may charge. The patient can appeal a decision that he did not have good cause not to attend a tribunal hearing. The Appeal Panel may decide that a report from the GP would be helpful. If so, the tribunal service would pay for a report, but there is still no obligation on the GP to provide it.

There is therefore no need for practices to respond to requests from Atos to provide confirmation that a patient is unable to attend an examination centre.

## Annual Conference of LMCs

The Annual Conference of LMCs will be held in London on 10 & 11 June. This year Derbyshire's representatives will be John Grenville, Sean King, John Ashcroft and Paul Weston-Smith..

Derbyshire LMC has submitted a record number of motions this year – 31 in total., on issues ranging from the management of community hospitals, a minimum standard for IT systems, language requirements for overseas doctors, damping down the high expectations of patients, and the importance of the reduction of health inequalities.

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## Bank holidays and repeat prescriptions



DHU came under significant pressure over the four day Easter bank holiday period. In particular, there was some demand from patients for repeat prescriptions. This should be largely avoidable. We would urge all practices to do whatever they can to try to ensure that patients will not need to request a repeat prescription during the period that the surgery is closed.

The figures are small in absolute terms but the work generated can add significantly to the pressure at DHU over a bank holiday. We have analysed the figures by practice. There were no requests for repeat prescriptions from 48 practices. Of the other 78 practices, rates ranged from 0.1 to 1.1 per thousand patients with 13 practices having rates of 0.6 per thousand patients or more.

Calculations based on very crude assumptions, (namely that 10% of all patients are on repeats and the average duration of a repeat prescription is 5 weeks – many practices use 28 day prescribing but some use longer) would indicate that we could expect almost 4000 repeat prescription requests per weekday across Derbyshire. The fact that DHU received about 195 requests over a 4 day period suggests that practices (and patients) are getting it right for the vast majority of the time. It is really just a question of trying to go that extra mile to reduce still further the pressure on DHU.

## Latest advice

In the past month GPC has issued the following:

Fit for the Future – evolution of general practice.  
Revised H1N1 DES guidance

Further details are available on application to the LMC office or on the BMA website [www.bma.org.uk](http://www.bma.org.uk)

## How to contact us

Derby & Derbyshire LMC Ltd office is at Norman House, Friar Gate, Derby DE1 1NU. Our telephone number is 01332 210008, fax 01332 341771. Our email address is now [office@derbyshirelmc.co.uk](mailto:office@derbyshirelmc.co.uk). The two Practice/PCT Liaison Officers are Melanie Beatham and Kate Lawrence who will continue to liaise with the same North and Southern practices as before the PCT reorganisation. Their email addresses are: [melanie.beatham@derbyshirelmc.co.uk](mailto:melanie.beatham@derbyshirelmc.co.uk) and [kate.lawrence@derbyshirelmc.co.uk](mailto:kate.lawrence@derbyshirelmc.co.uk).