



Cremation

(1) New cremation regulations and forms will come into effect in January 2009. Cremation forms B and C (which two separate medical practitioners have to complete) will be called cremation forms 4 and 5. The main policy changes to the regulations are that they will allow bereaved families to inspect the medical forms of a deceased family member before cremation takes place. Families will also be able to draw the medical referee's attention to any concerns about unexpected symptoms or discrepancies in the case. Further details are available at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/pdf/uksi_20082841_en.pdf These regulations and forms are an interim measure and will precede longer-term Department of Health plans to create the role of a Medical Examiner, who will deal with all deaths.

(2) John Grenville writes "I have recently been involved in a problem regarding the completion of cremation forms. The attending doctor telephoned a practice to ask if a specific doctor could do a second part cremation form. The receptionist said that she would pass the message on but it was delayed. When the doctor did get the message he was, for various reasons, unable to do the form and left a message with the receptionist at the first doctor's practice. This message did not get through and eventually the undertakers had to contact both practices to find out when the second part was going to be done and by whom. Unfortunately, the first part doctor had now gone on holiday and the presumptive second part doctor was not available as he works part time. Eventually I did the second part, having managed to contact the first part doctor on his holiday, with half an hour to spare before the cremation would have had to be postponed because the crematorium would not have received the forms in time.

"There is perhaps nothing that casts the profession in a worse light than having to postpone a cremation because of failure to get the forms signed properly. I would urge doctors to take responsibility for ensuring that they personally deal with matters pertaining to cremation forms and do not rely on others to pass messages for them. Equally, I would urge practice managers to ensure that staff are aware that doctors need to speak to each other on a one to one basis if cremation forms are to be completed."

Life Line

Life Line is a commercial company offering various investigations, including whole body CT scans, for screening for various conditions. They are currently targeting Derbyshire and GPs may see patients coming in with letters from Life Line. It is, of course, up to you how you advise such patients but it is probably worth pointing out that the NHS does run screening programmes (breast cancer, cervical cancer, bowel cancer, Chlamydia, etc) when the science suggests that these are worthwhile. Many patients may not realise that a full life scan screen involves exposure to ionising radiation greater than normal background radiation.

Primary Care Research Network

The Primary Care Research Network (PCRN) has been established in England as part of the National Institute for Health Research. Its aims are

- to improve the evidence base for primary care,
- to inform the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and management of illness and disease in primary care
- to facilitate and increase the participation of general practices, primary care practitioners and patients in research.

Practices who take the opportunity to be involved with PCRN research can have confidence that the studies will be of high quality and important to the NHS. PCRN can offer practices free access to UKCRN training and costs to cover staff time and involvement. If your practice is interested in becoming involved, contact the East Midlands South Yorkshire Hub of PCRN at Birch House, Ransom Wood Business Park, Southwell Road West, Rainworth, Notts NG21 0HJ, Tel 01623 673317 or email nathalie.bailey-flitter@nottspct.nhs.uk

Xmas & New Year opening hours



Following discussions between the LMC and Derek Bray, the County PCT has relaxed their position with regard to opening hours over Christmas and the New Year. Practices will be receiving an email from the PCT shortly.

Support for GPs

At this time of year the Cameron Fund writes to all LMCs as part of a seasonal fund-raising initiative. Traditionally, members of the committee have donated their December travelling expenses to the Cameron Fund and, of course, the LMC urges practices to contribute to the Cameron Fund (see our piece in May 2008 newsletter). The Sick Doctors Trust is also appealing for funds and we have details in the LMC office if any practices wish to contribute.

It is probably opportune therefore at this time to remind GPs of the various sources of help that they can access if they are running into trouble – financial, emotional or health wise. The LMC office can often help to direct individual practitioners to appropriate sources of help. Some of the major players are:

BMA Counselling Service gives doctors the opportunity to talk in confidence to trained counsellors round the clock 365 days a year. Telephone 08459 200169 or visit www.bma.org.uk/doctorsfordoctors for more details.

Doctors for Doctors – an enhancement of the BMA Counselling Service above. Telephone 020 7383 6739 directly or email info.d4d@bma.org.uk

The Doctors Support Network provides confidential advice and support for doctors with mental health problems. Telephone 0870 321 0642 or visit www.dsn.org.uk

The Sick Doctors Trust for doctors who have dependency problems. Telephone 0870 444 5163 or visit www.sick-doctors-trust.co.uk

The Cameron Fund helps GPs, former GPs and their dependants who are suffering from poverty, hardship or distress. Telephone 020 7388 0796 or visit www.cameronfund.org.uk

Substance Misuse

Meetings for GPwSIs in Substance Misuse have now been opened up to Shared Care GPs. The next meeting, at 7.30pm on 7 January, will take place in Committee Room 1 at Derbyshire County Council Offices in Matlock. Buffet food will be available from 7 pm, but please email mcbinghams@btinternet.com if you wish to attend.

The LMC wishes you
a Merry Christmas
and Happy New
Year.



County PCT Provider Arm Patient Transport

The County PCT Provider Arm has its own patient transport service which is separate from East Midlands Ambulance Service. It is used to transport patients to and from services provided by the provider arm. Following a recent accident involving a patient being transported in a wheelchair, the provider arm has introduced a system of risk assessment for patient using its transport.

The LMC has been informed of one occasion when a detailed risk assessment form was sent to a GP for completion. John Grenville has had discussions with the provider arm and it is our understanding that “wherever possible” the risk assessment will be completed by the service to which the patient has been referred. It was, however, impossible to obtain a cast iron assurance that risk assessment forms would not be sent to GPs for completion. The LMC has pointed out that GPs are not aware of the level of training of staff in the transport service nor of the level of equipment in the vehicles and that they are not therefore able to complete a risk assessment form. John also pointed out that GPs are not contractually obliged to complete such forms and has suggested that, if the provider arm wish to commission GPs to undertake risk assessments, they will need to fund the service fully, including any necessary training.

Latest advice

In the past month GPC has issued the following:

Dynamising Factor November 2008
Practice Funding October 2008
Access to health records
Next Stage Review guidance for LMCs

Further details are available on application to the LMC office or on the BMA website 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. 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 and kate.lawrence@derbyshirelmc.co.uk.