

April 2018 – Surgery Newsletter



At the time of writing we still have many snow drifts melting a week on from the unprecedented snowfall in March. What a few days that was for the village! We would like to offer our sincere thanks to all the local farmers and their staff for keeping the roads in and out of Great Bentley passable. Although there were still times the police closed roads, this was only for a couple of hours at a time as a direct result of their outstanding efforts. It really was a tough week for everyone, but we're proud that we managed to keep providing a basic service to all patients for our usual opening hours of 8.00am to 6.30pm.

Text Reminder Service for appointments – We may have a mammoth task on our hands depending upon interpretation of new data protection regulations coming into force next month. At the time of writing it was still unclear if we could continue sending texts to remind patients of their appointments. We are currently being told that we must get explicit consent from every individual patient that we hold a mobile number for, to continue offering this service to them. As you can imagine this would be a lengthy task during which the 'did not attend' rates could shoot through the roof, not only here but across the NHS. It's not an exaggeration to suggest that this could have a massive effect on the NHS nationally. We are putting a lot of work into challenging the local guidance by contacting the Government's Information Commissioners Office directly. If we do end up having to get individual explicit consent, we will really need every patients help to get this consent for everyone as quickly as possible. Watch this space!

Urgent and Home Visit requests – I would like to remind patients of how important it is to call us as early as possible in the day for any visit requests or requests for urgent appointments. The on call doctor has a difficult job of only having a certain number of appointments to offer, so if we know how busy we are going to be as early as possible, he/she can ensure that those who really need an urgent appointment get them in a timely manner. Also please remember that home visits are only for genuinely housebound patients and children can always be brought in.

Clinical Research – You may remember quite some time ago that we announced that we have gained 'Research Practice' accreditation. We are working hard to increase the amount of clinical research we do which is led by Dr Nambi and Nurse Jo. This provides the practice with much needed additional income to help keep us viable, but also provides patients with an opportunity to give something back to the NHS and be involved in important projects to improve medical care. As a result, some patients may be contacted by us to offer an opportunity to take part.

Prescriptions – We seem to be getting more and more calls asking us if prescriptions have been issued and in the vast majority of cases we have indeed issued them. These calls do however take a considerable time to answer and significantly slow down productivity. Please do not call to check if a prescription has been issued unless you've checked with your pharmacy first. It's very rare for us not to have fully processed any requests within the 3 working days we ask for. ***If patients' sign up for the Patient Access online service and order using this, they can log in and see when the request has been processed, so why not sign up?***

<p>The next meeting of the Patient Participation Group will take place at 6.30pm on Thursday 19th April 2018 at the Great Bentley Village Hall.</p>

Richard P Miller – Practice Manager