

Surgery Newsletter December 2013

Well, December is here already! We've had a year of many changes to cope with here at the Surgery. Well it's not quite finished yet and neither have the changes. One of our longest serving members of staff Hugh Cronin is leaving after 20 years as Practice Manager with the last couple of months as part time Business Manager. Hugh has seen more changes than anyone, but has decided that it's time to hang up his surgery hat and move on to a new challenge. You may still see Hugh about however, as he's going to be helping to run the Green Pharmacy now it is completely separate from the Surgery. I wish Hugh well in his new job.

The other and hopefully last significant change for a good while is that we have welcomed a new part time salaried Dr Bhavini Muir. Bhav has not long finished her GP training locally and this is her first permanent GP position. Bhav has spent many years training in both hospitals and GP Surgeries so you can be confident that her skills and knowledge are excellent. She is also a very nice lady who I know will fast become a favourite with our patients.

I've also realised that we're not yet introduced you all to our new Nurse Practitioner/Manager Tracy Mooney who started in September having moved to us from a surgery in Earls Colne. Tracy is extremely well qualified and experienced and even writes regular articles in nursing publications. However, even though she has so many strings to her bow she's a really good nurse practitioner and a very nice person as well.

Right then, now I've got the hellos and goodbyes done, down to business:

I want to acknowledge what I know has been a difficult time for our patients over the last few months. It's been very difficult to make both routine and urgent appointments and for that I apologise. I would like to explain why this has been the case and what we're doing about it. As you know we've had two GP partners and one nurse practitioner leave in a very short space of time. Although one of these departures was expected, the other two were not. Unfortunately we only got 1 week and 4 weeks' notice which left us in a very tricky position. As you may have seen in the press recently, there is a real problem recruiting both doctors and nurses in Tendring, so we really were very lucky to find replacements. Both new clinicians had to give notice to their previous employers, so even though we made employment offers very quickly, we had to wait until they could start. This is why we have been short of appointments recently. This is not an excuse, but a reality that we have had to do our best to work around. Moving ahead with our new team, we will be reviewing everything we do at the surgery and how we do it. This includes how and when we offer appointments for our patients. We've had the same system for many years but patient demands and expectations have changed significantly. No system is perfect, but we want to try to be as good as we can with the resources we have.

On a more positive note, I am very pleased to report that by the time you read this we will have had our very first Patient Participation Group (PPG) Meeting. We advertised in the surgery and had over 30 applications to join our new PPG, which will give our patients the chance to be involved in the way the surgery moves ahead into the future. At the time of writing the meeting is 4 days away and Dr Bhatti and I are very much looking forward to this new initiative.

With Christmas heading towards us at some speed, I also want to let you know of another initiative aimed at making the surgery, the Green Pharmacy but more importantly our patients' lives much easier. Every repeat prescription request taken from 11th November will have resulted in TWO prescriptions being issued to your chosen pharmacy. This is to ensure

that patients' will have their medication ready to collect during December without having to suffer any delays due to the holiday period.

Finally (honest!) we are coming to the end of the 'flu season' and will be trying to get eligible patients in for their jabs before winter sets in properly. If you know you should be having a jab, please call us to book an appointment. If you're not sure, then call us anyway and we can check for you.

Writing a surgery newsletter is very new to me and I hope you have found my first one both informative and interesting. I would like to try something new in 2014 by having a guest writer each month, but I would also welcome feedback at any time so please feel free to do just that!

Richard P Miller
Practice Manager