

## **Surgery News**

As many of you will know, for the last year or so we have been sending text reminders about appointments to patients' mobile phones. The system is working really well and has certainly reduced the number of people forgetting their appointments and needing to rebook.

So far, we have mobile numbers for about a third of our patients and we'd like to at least double that figure if we can. I know that young mums have found it especially useful to get reminders about appointments for baby immunisations etc, which are often booked a long way in advance. However, I'm sure there are plenty of older patients with mobiles whose lives are so full and hectic that reminders would help. If you have a mobile and you haven't yet told us the number, please let us have it and we can add you into the service. Just to make this really easy, there is a tear-off slip on the back of this month's Quiz Page that you can complete and send in to us. Don't ever say that your magazine doesn't spoil you.

News now of another new development. We've discovered that Richard, our Assistant Manager, is something of a geek when it comes to computer stuff. (I'm sure he won't mind me saying so.) He is now working on developing a website for the practice and this should be up and running before too long. I promise you that it will be far more slick, interesting and attractive than anything that we could have managed without him.

The website will contain all sorts of useful information about healthcare in general, including bits and pieces that have appeared in these articles over the years. It will tell you more about the various services available at the surgery and how to take advantage of them. There will also be a direct link to the EMIS Access system which enables patients to order repeat prescriptions as well as to book, cancel or change appointments over the internet. This can be done at any time and helps keep our 'phones free for more urgent matters.

I'll tell you more about the website as soon as I can, but in the meantime, if anyone else wants to sign up to EMIS Access, which is completely free of charge, please let us know. We can get that arranged now so that you can take full advantage of the new website as soon as it is in action.

A lot of you will have known Molly Starling, our secretary here for many years, who very sadly died last year after being ill more or less ever since she retired. Her daughter-in-law, Tina Starling, tells me that she is running the London Marathon this year in Molly's memory, with the aim of raising money for a Motor Neurone Disease charity.

Tina has asked if we would put up a poster about her efforts and keep sponsorship forms available here, which we couldn't possibly say "no" to in view of our connection with Molly. So if anybody would like to support Tina and the charity – and I hope that many people will - it can be done at the surgery. Good luck to her in her efforts. The foot balm is on me!

Sarah at the Pharmacy has asked me to use a bit of my space this month to mention that improvements are planned there to help them cope better with their ever growing work-load. The shop and dispensary were designed fifteen years ago when far less dispensing was done, and for a long time it has been realised that the present setup is no longer adequate. At last, after some lateral thinking and a planning application, something can be done to improve things.

The first job will be to move the front door a few feet, and this will start on Friday, 11th March with most of the work being completed over that weekend. The pharmacy will be open on Friday and Saturday as usual, but if patients are able to avoid it on those days it would help. Anyone who does use it then is asked to take special care as it will be a building site for those few of days and whilst every effort will be made to keep it safe, there will inevitably be extra hazards.

After the door has been relocated, internal alterations will follow to increase the dispensing area, make the public area more user-friendly and, hopefully, speed up the prescription counter-service. Apologies in advance for the disruption that the work will cause, but I'm sure it will be worth it.

Sarah also asked me to let people know that due to popular demand the home delivery prescription service has been extended to Saturday mornings. Details about how that all works are available from the pharmacy.

Hugh Cronin  
Practice Manager