

Final Note from the Chair

Dear Colleagues,

It does not seem that long since I wrote my first piece for “inPractice” but as my three year term as Chairman of RCGP Northern Ireland ends in November 2010 I have been reflecting on my experiences, as every good GP should!

It has been a great privilege to represent the profession and to meet and work with many colleagues from a variety of backgrounds. I have had the opportunity to visit the Republic of Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales and of course every Trust area in Northern Ireland. The common feature wherever I went was one of dedicated people providing high quality care that was greatly valued by patients and communities. Nowhere is this better demonstrated than at the RCGP Celebration Evening when general practitioners are recognised for their outstanding service after being nominated, not by their peers nor by an eminent panel but by their patients. Events such as this prove that many “ordinary” general practitioners across the country are in fact extraordinary.

There are those who wish, for one reason or another, to attack or undermine general practice and general practitioners and there are those who simply do not know or understand general practice but the fact remains that general practice is delivering high quality, cost effective care that is improving health outcomes. As Churchill said “The truth is incontrovertible, malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end; there it is.”

The last three years have been dominated nationally by revalidation and locally by the changes involved in the Review of Public Administration (RPA). “Out of Hours” care and proposals to alter GP working models have also been high on the agenda. In response, RCGP Northern Ireland has reorganised and strengthened its structures so as to better represent, support and respond to all members at every stage of their career.

RCGP Northern Ireland has enhanced its relationship with relevant organisations and in particular has worked in partnership with the Northern Ireland General Practitioner Committee (GPC NI) of the British Medical Association (BMA) to produce a 10 year strategy for the future of general practice in Northern Ireland.

Underpinning all of this is the fact that a patient centred,

high quality, cost effective health service can only be provided if general practice is at its core. The present financial circumstances only serve to reinforce this view.

It has been said that the future of the NHS is likely to depend, to a large extent, on the future of general practice. After three

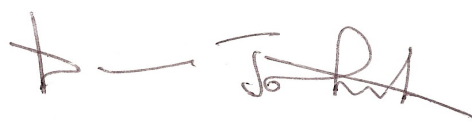
years I am more convinced than ever that general practitioners have a vital leadership role. Tenacity, commitment, and imagination will be required and this will not be achieved by simply putting people into a building or an organisation in which they have no professional, emotional, or financial investment.

Clearly a truly modern health service should enhance the GP surgery not abolish it. Promoting, empowering and investing in general practice is the key to providing an effective, high quality, patient centered health service that is fit for purpose in the 21st century.

Martin Luther King said, “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” I suspect this is as true in our professional life as it is in our personal life. I remain optimistic that general practitioners, given the opportunity, will not remain silent and that despite the challenges that lie ahead general practice will yet prove to be the solution to many of the problems facing the health service.

Thank you for your support and kindness over the last three years.

Best wishes,



David J Johnston
(Chair, RCGP Northern Ireland)



Dr David Johnston, RCGP Northern Ireland Chair

In the spotlight with Sir Peter Rubin

RCGP Northern Ireland was delighted to have the opportunity to ask Professor Sir Peter Rubin, Chair of the General Medical Council (GMC), a number of questions in regards to the role of GMC and his plans for the organisation in the future. There were a number of issues covered during the interview, one of which was Revalidation, a very topical issue with GPs here in Northern Ireland.

You mentioned Revalidation is an area of interest for all GPs in Northern Ireland. What is happening with Revalidation and when will it begin?

There has been no date set for when Revalidation will be officially launched. The GMC approach to Revalidation will continue to be pragmatic and incremental, ensuring the process is fit for purpose yet workable in the real world, at the frontline of medical practice.

Do you believe that GPs and primary care in Northern Ireland are well placed to deal with the introduction of Revalidation?

The feedback from recent meetings and road shows has proved that GPs in Northern Ireland are very well placed to deal with Revalidation. The developments of the Annual Appraisal System not only goes right to the heart of what revalidation is about, it has also prepared GPs for much of the process required to successfully revalidate.

Will the current financial climate and Government cutbacks have any impact of the introduction of revalidation?

I don't think Revalidation will be affected by the challenging financial climate, providing we ensure that the components of revalidation, such as appraisal, which is

already ongoing, remain in the present format. In terms of the costs associated with Multi Source Feedback (MSF), organizations interested in achieving excellence should be using this process anyway.



Above: Sir Peter Rubin

Could you outline any plans the GMC has made to accommodate and support GPs registered in the Republic of Ireland to go through the planned revalidation process?'

GPs from the Republic of Ireland who wish to work in Northern Ireland or any other part of the UK must hold GMC registration with a licence to practice, and be on the GP Register. This is the same for doctors from any part of the EU or rest of the world. Northern Ireland legislation also means they have to be on the Health and Social Care Board's Medical Performers List. This already requires them to participate in annual appraisal under the auspices of the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency.

Revalidation will build on this rather than replace this with an additional or separate process. While appraisal will form the basis of revalidation, the type of evidence required to support successful appraisal is still being finalised.

In doing this we will be taking into account the views of all those who have responded to the consultation, including doctors who perform a limited number of sessions in the UK healthcare system. Where changes can be made that do not compromise patient safety we will try to do so.

For the full interview please visit:

http://www.rcgp.org.uk/councils_faculties/rcgp_northern_ireland/news_views/current_news.aspx

Autumn Symposium: Mental Health

On Thursday 14th October, the Royal College of General Practitioners Northern Ireland held its annual Autumn Symposium. The Symposium which was held in conjunction with the Royal College of Psychiatrists was on the topic of Mental Health. The guest speaker was Professor Carolyn Chew-Graham, Professor of Primary Care at the University of Manchester. Other speakers included Dr Conor Barton, who focused on Dementia and the assessment of cognitive function in General Practice and managing the difficult dementia cases at home, Dr Bridget O'Rawe, who spoke on the diagnosis and treatment using Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing Therapy and finally Dr Alan Curley who focused on advanced cognitive and behavioural strategies relating to Mental Health



Above L-R: Angela McLaughlin, Dr Grainne Doran, Prof Carolyn Chew-Graham, Dr Alan Curley, Dr Conor Barton & Dr Bridget O'Rawe

Over 35 delegates attended the event and feedback has been very positive. Both RCGP Northern Ireland and the Royal College of Psychiatrists would like to thank everyone who attended and participated on the day, with a special word of

Patients in Practice

Workshops

A major focus of the Patients in Practice Group (PiP) Operational Plan for 2010/2011 is to support Patient Participation Groups throughout the province and to further this objective, PiP have recently hosted a number of workshops for those practice managers who are keen to set up new Patient Participation Groups.

Mr Alan Braiden Chair of the Patients in Practice Group commented that "The main focus of PiPs work for the year will be to help increase the number of Patient Participation Groups throughout the province."

The workshops provided excellent opportunities for practice managers to discuss the issues and potential barriers in developing new Patient Participation Groups. As part of the workshops the PiP Group gathered supportive information which may be helpful to practice managers setting up new Patient Participation Groups and hope to use this information to develop a set of guidelines and support material for those wishing to set up a new Patient Participation Group.

If you would like to find out more about the outcome of the workshops or have a keen interest in setting up a Patient Participation Group please contact:

Edward Hanna

T: 028 90 230055 E: ehanna@rcgp.org.uk

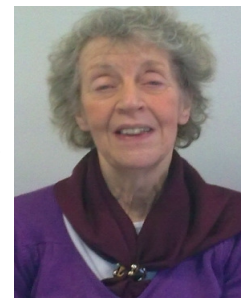
Promoting Patient Involvement

The PiP Group will also be looking to develop relationships with key stakeholders and a meeting has been arranged for representatives of the PiP group to meet with the Health Committee on Tuesday 30th November.

Getting to know you

This month we are delighted to introduce Ms Loretta Jones from the Patients in Practice Group.

Loretta trained as a General Nurse and Midwife. She has had the opportunity to work in Mental Health, children's Nursing and Orthopaedics. Loretta recently retired as a ward manager in the Paediatric Orthopaedic and Rheumatology Unit at Musgrave Park Hospital.

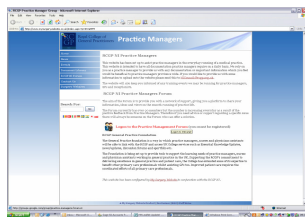


Above: Mrs Loretta Jones

Loretta enjoys the arts, social history, and has an interest in mental health issues and the welfare of children with learning and physical difficulties.

RCGP Northern Ireland Practice Managers Forum

The Royal College of GPs in Northern Ireland, in conjunction with MySurgery Website, are currently in the process of developing a new website to support practice managers across the province. The website will contain various documents that practice managers could use on a daily basis, such as sample templates and processes, information on locum availability and any other information relevant to practice managers.



Above: Screenshot of the new Practice Managers Forum website

"To ensure continued success and future development of both the Forum and the new website it is extremely important that Practice Managers contribute as many templates and useful information as possible to keep this facility innovative and contemporary!"

(Mrs Anita Mc Creesh, Chair of the Practice Managers Forum Committee)

Quality Committee Update

RCGP Northern Ireland launched 'Modular Quality Practice Award' (QPA) on 1st July 2010 which aims to encourage non QPA GP practices to undertake a more manageable modularised approach to the award.

Instead of having 18 months to complete QPA, practices will have 3 years to complete six modules, covering organisational and clinical areas, involving the whole team.

Upon completion of each module a certificate of achievement is issued and if all six modules are completed within the 3 year timescale the practice will then have the opportunity to undertake the full Modular QPA visit.

If you would like to find out more about the award please contact:

Edward Hanna

T: 028 90 230055

E: ehanna@rcgp.org.uk

Political Update

Meeting with Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Representatives from RCGP Northern Ireland are scheduled to meet with the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety on the 17th November 2010. This will provide an excellent opportunity to ask the Minister questions regarding the Northern Ireland budget, commissioning, revalidation and to talk about future plans for the Department for Health.

Democratic Unionist Party

DUP Launch new Manifesto

<http://www.dup.org.uk/default.htm>

Jonathan Bell praises work of the N.Ireland Hospice

<http://www.dup.org.uk/default.htm>

Ulster Unionist Party

Minister to forge ahead with tobacco legislation

<http://www.uup.org/news/health/health-news-archive/minister-to-forge-ahead-with-tobacco-legislation.php>

£8.8million Pharmaceuticals building opened

<http://www.uup.org/news/health/health-news-archive/163-8-8million-pharmaceuticals-building-opened.php>

New treatment for prostate cancer will benefit patients

<http://www.uup.org/news/health/health-news-archive/new-treatment-for-prostate-cancer-will-benefit-patients.php>

Social Democratic Labour Party

McGlone: Fight will continue to reverse A&E closure

http://www.sdlp.ie/index.php/newsroom_media/newsarticle/mcglone_fight_will_continue_to_reverse_ae_closure/

Gallagher: Money must be found for radiotherapy unit

http://www.sdlp.ie/index.php/newsroom_media/newsarticle/gallagher_money_must_be_found_for_radiotherapy_unit/

Sinn Fein

Welcome for Review of Medical Negligence Cases by

Health Minister, but full costs must be released

<http://www.sinnfein.ie/contents/19224>

Carers of children with autism must get necessary help.

<http://www.sinnfein.ie/contents/19211>

12 month ban on new 'Legal Highs' should be implemented here" Sinn Féin

<http://www.sinnfein.ie/contents/19093>

Alliance Party

Lunn welcomes new operating theatres for Lagan Valley Hospital

http://www.allianceparty.org/news/005443/lunn_welcomes_new_operating_theatres_for_lagan_valley_hospital.html

Other News

Department cuts details revealed

Northern Ireland's health and education departments are to escape spending cuts of about £45m.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-politics-10853525>

£2 heart disease test

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1313141/2-heart-disease-test-Blood-screening-revolutionise-cardiac-diabetes-treatment.html>

Are you being labelled? - 'Medical records are not always accurate'

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/8008608/Doctors-over-diagnose.html>

United we'll save the NHS from con-dem disaster

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/health-news/2010/09/15/united-we-ll-save-nhs-from-condem-disaster-115875-22562209/>

Students putting lives at risk over meningitis signs

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/health/students-putting-lives-at-risk-over-meningitis-signs-14953430.html#ixzz10GteUKYc>

RCGP submits White Paper response

RCGP has officially responded to the NHS white paper giving its backing to the principle of 'shared decision-making' with patients, and the statement: 'no decision about me without me'. The response clearly emphasises the need for the unique long-term relationship between patients and GPs to be retained in the provision of care as well as the commissioning of services.

GPs support stronger clinical leadership for commissioning services for patients, but training, time and resources are necessary to make it a success.

For the full consultation response please visit:

http://www.rcgp.org.uk/pdf/RCGP_response_to_Equity_and_Excellence_Liberating_the_NHS.pdf

Upcoming Events

RCGP Northern Ireland Annual Awards Gala 2010

This is the 9th year of this very popular event and the evening provides general practice with one of the few opportunities to celebrate the good work that is done in this area on a daily basis, and the contribution it makes to society. Awards being presented this year include:

- GP of the Year Award
- Practice Manager of the Year Award
- Practice Administration Team of the Year Award
- Caring About Carers Award
- Quality Practice Award

Further details on the evening can be accessed at www.rcgp-ni.org.uk or by contacting Angela McLaughlin on:

T: 028 9023 0055

E: amclaughlin@rcgp.org.uk

Introductory Course in Medical Homeopathy

Date: 23rd October 2010 20th November 2010
15th January 2011 9th February 2011
26th March 2011

Venue: The Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim

Organised by The Royal London Homeopathic Hospital, this professional multi-disciplinary course welcomes all statutorily registered health professionals including; doctors, dentists, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, physiotherapists and podiatrists. This course will enable participants to learn about the principles of homeopathic medicine and how to integrate homeopathy into their everyday practice. Course bookings and enquiries should be made to Mrs Amy Bowrin MBE at:

T: 02073918823/4 **E:** amy.bowrin@uclh.nhs.uk

Those wishing to discuss details with a local contact, please contact Dr Smyth at:

T: 07712188165 **E:** homeopathy-ni@supanet.com

For further information please visit: www.rcgp-ni.prg.uk

RCGP Northern Ireland Practice Managers Forum: Legal Aspects of Practice Management

Date: 10th November 2010

Venue: Mellon Country Inn, Omagh

Time: 10.00am - 1.00pm

The Royal College of GPs Northern Ireland in association with GlaxoSmithKline will be hosting a training day for practice managers and GPs in the Mellon Country Inn Omagh. Rosemary Wilson a local Barrister who lectures on all legal and professional aspects of healthcare will be providing the training. The key aspects Rosemary will cover are:

- Documentation and Record Keeping
- Consent
- Clinical Negligence
- Accountability
- Data protection



Rosemary Wilson

Cost:

Members of Practice Managers Forum: £20 per person

Non Members of Practice Managers Forum: £25 per person

For further details please contact Bronagh Monaghan at:

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