

Private Treatment / NHS Treatment

It would seem that patients who have opted to undergo private episodes of treatment are again being directed to Practices to have some of this treatment done “under the NHS”. Many Practices are reporting patients making appointments for blood tests, dressing changes, wound checks, etc., having been directed to do so by the private provider and the first the Practice is aware of this is when the patient is in the Consulting room.

This was previously discussed in late 2013 at NHS Tayside General Practice Advisory Committee where it was agreed that the advice we would send out to Practices is that they could invoice the private provider that sent the patient to the GP for the suture removal, etc., as this should not be classed as NHS Treatment but as part of the private procedure.

Practices are also entitled to decline to undertake this work and direct the patient back to the private provider, especially as in many instances said provider has made no communication with the practice to check that they have the capacity to take on this private work prior to the patient attending the practice.

We have recently written to SPIRE Healthcare, as they seem to be the main offenders at the moment, informing them that we will remind Practices again of this guidance and to make them aware that:

- Should they wish the Practice to undertake any part of this private episode of care they firstly contact the practice and ensure that this is possible before directing the patient to attend the GP Practice
- They will receive invoices from Practices for any of this work they have undertaken

Please let us know if this continues to be a problem for Practices.

Meet the LMC Visits

The Medical Secretaries have both carried out a number of these visits to Practices across Tayside last year and they seem to be well received.

The format is that one of the Medical Secretaries will come along one lunchtime, usually for about an hour, and chat with the GPs /PM about any issues they have and will also give a brief overview of what the LMC is involved in at the moment.

If you would like to find out a bit more or arrange one of these visits then please email Hazel at the LMC Office.

Barnardos – Requests for Hep B Vaccinations

Practices are being contacted by Barnardos about patients who Foster for them saying they have asked the patient to speak to the Practice about getting a Hepatitis B vaccine.

As you probably know you cannot vaccinate and charge your own patients for Hep B for occupational reasons so this throws up 2 possible scenarios.

If the patient has to fund this themselves then you would refer them to a buddy Practice who could vaccinate and charge them for it – if you have no buddy practice available then suggest to the patient they look in the yellow pages or google occupational health providers in Tayside. (You should not suggest one particular provider over another as this could be interpreted as operating a cartel under competition rules – this is the reason Practices often suggest patients ‘phone the LMC office and we will happily explain this complex situation to them.)

If Barnardos are to fund this then you could contract directly with them to provide this service and treat the patient accordingly. The only sticking point with this is if they tell the patient to pay and they will refund them – that is not a clear enough distinction and you would be advised to get a “contract” from Barnardos and should not accept payment directly from the patient.

Wishing you a Happy New Year from me and all the LMC Team.

Dr Mary O’Brien
Medical Secretary

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