

Biggar Medical Practice Patient Group Newsletter

Number 3

April 2015

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Welcome to our third newsletter!

We hope you had a happy Easter and wish you all an enjoyable summer!

Since the previous newsletter we have been very busy working with the practice on a number of very important issues, which we will briefly cover in this edition. Please remember if you require more information on any of the subjects covered or you would like us to look at other areas please contact Donald Stewart the Business Manager of the practice, with whom we meet every couple of months at our scheduled meetings. You can find the notes of our meetings at: www.biggarmedicalpractice.co.uk

Anne Swan Chair, Biggar Medical Practice Patient Group

New Members

Our High School teenage members have now moved on to University we are pleased to welcome another High School student, Morag Harley, also joining us are Sarah Sinclair, George Cunningham and Gail Moore.



From left to right George Cunningham, Jean Elliott, Gail Moore, Sarah Sinclair, Anne Swan (Chair), Steve Harvey, Patrick Ross-Taylor and Barbara Duffner (Deputy Chair). Not in photo Morag Harley.

Health and Social Care Partnership Integration

We met with Mr Craig Cunningham a Senior Manager responsible for the Community Health Partnership to learn about the new organisation being formed from April 1st 2015. This organisation will be responsible for providing a joined up approach to all Community Health and Social Services. Integration is about health and adult social care working together, so people get a single service to meet their needs, without worrying about whether it is provided by Council or NHS staff. This is especially important for people with long term conditions and disabilities, many of whom are older people. The main purpose is to shift the balance of care by aiming to reduce avoidable hospital admissions and Accident and Emergency attendances. For this to happen, services within the community need to develop and improve. We will be watching this development closely and we plan to meet with representatives from the new organisation towards the end of the year to see what progress has been made for our area. We will also seek feedback from local service providers and where possible we would welcome any feedback from patients.

Kello Hospital

We have met with the new Hospital Manager Jane Riley, we also had a tour of the hospital. We were very impressed with the brightness and cleanliness of the hospital and with the staff commitment. We did take note of a number of areas that could be improved including staffing levels, out of hours Medical cover and transport, which we have raised with Managers from NHS Lanarkshire. We are currently waiting for feedback on these areas.

GP Referrals to Hospitals

GP Outpatient Referrals to NHS Lanarkshire

We had a very helpful presentation from the Referral Management Centre, that manages all GP Outpatient referrals to NHS Lanarkshire.

The Referral Centre has to operate against a number of waiting time standards:

- 12 weeks for new outpatient appointments
- 6 weeks for diagnostic test and investigations
- 90% of all referrals requiring treatment to receive treatment within 18 weeks of the GP referral

Urgent referrals will be seen within 6 weeks and patients with suspicion of cancer will be seen within 2 weeks.

Should you wish to see the full NHS Lanarkshire Patient Access Policy it is available on their public website at www.nhslanarkshire.org.uk or please ask the practice.

The important thing to note, when a GP tells you they are referring you to a hospital outpatient service, is that it may take at least 6 to 8 weeks before you receive an appointment through the post. The Referral Centre offers a patient focused booking service and they should therefore answer the telephone reasonably promptly and be helpful to you should you have to contact them. Please bear in mind though, the centre receives thousands of referrals a week and a similar number of calls.

All referrals are looked at by an appropriate clinician to ensure patients are dealt with according to your clinical need. It is very important that you contact the Referral Centre if you are not able to make your appointment and to avoid a wasted appointment that could have been used for another patient.

The contact number for the Referral Management Centre is 0300 303 0249

GP Referrals to NHS Lothian

The practice has been experiencing some difficulties in some specialities, in making referrals to NHS Lothian when clinically appropriate. We wrote to the Chair of NHS Lothian in November on this matter. We have been informed they are in the process of developing a policy on what referrals they will accept from other Health Boards and how the process will be managed. They have asked NHS Lanarkshire to provide input in the process and should be in a position to clarify their policy within the next two months.

Future Plans

We have meetings arranged with The Scottish Ambulance service and Local Pharmacist.

We are also planning to look at how patients who suffer with a stroke or have cardiac problems are taken care of. This will help us understand how emergency cases are managed in a safe environment according to the latest clinical practice and evidence. In a rural area, time to when you receive treatment is very important.

GP Referrals to NHS Borders

The practice has 1,132 patients who live in the NHS Borders area who would normally be referred to The Borders General Hospital where the above standards for NHS Lanarkshire also apply.

The NHS Borders Patient Access Policy it is available on their public website at www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk or please ask the practice.

The contact numbers for the Appointments Office/Central Booking are 01896 826752 / 826754 / 826755.

Patient Group Survey

The Patient Group undertook a brief 4 question survey last year. The answers to our questions and the comments made were helpful to us in deciding on our priorities. Summaries of responses and comments can be found on our website at www.biggarmedicalpractice.co.uk. We would be most grateful if you could find 5 minutes to complete this years survey which contains the following five short questions:

- Are you generally satisfied with local health services? If no please provide brief details of your concerns.
- Did you know about the Biggar Medical Practice Patient Group? If 'yes' how did you hear about us?
- Have you signed up to use the Practice's on-line service? If No, please state briefly why not. If Yes, do you have any comments on the service?
- Is there anything you think is working well in the practice? If Yes please provide details.
- Do you have any suggestions for what could be improved in the practice? If Yes please provide details

The survey will help us understand how we might be able to assist the practice in continuing to improve services for patients. Copies of the survey are available in the waiting room and distributed within the practice area. You can also complete the survey online at www.biggarmedicalpractice.co.uk/survey.html

Last Survey You Asked - We did!

- Several respondents expressed concerns about the processes for making appointments and related issues. In our Newsletter following the survey responses we drew attention to the development of an on-line service for booking appointments and requesting repeat prescriptions.
- The use of that service should address many of the concerns. In this year's survey we are looking for views on the on-line service.
- We have written to Borders General Hospital to ask for a meeting to discuss how we might address the communications problems being experienced by the Practice and patients of the Practice.
- We persuaded the Health Board to erect a sign identifying the Kello Hospital as a minor injuries unit. We have expressed concerns about staffing levels in the Kello Hospital and are awaiting a response from Lanarkshire Health Board.
- We used the very helpful responses to the survey to help us decide which organisations to invite to be present at our successful Health Care Fair.

NHS Lanarkshire's Primary Care Out of Hours Services

Several members of the Patient Group attended the NHS Lanarkshire Out of Hours (OOH) Consultation meeting on 16th March. It was clear that the lack of sufficient GPs makes it impossible to run five local Out of Hours clinics. NHS Lanarkshire has therefore proposed either one clinic at Hamilton or two clinics based in Hamilton and Airdrie. We raised a number of issues facing our rural area including:

- Travel arrangements for those at distant locations/unable – for a variety of reasons – to travel to the new OOH centres; the fact that some in Lanarkshire would be closer to OOH services in other Health Board Areas yet would be required to go to the Lanarkshire locations;
- Whether there would be cuts in the funding for those who had travel difficulties;
- How Lanarkshire could be sure that it could provide, on an on-going basis the medical resources necessary for the effective running of the one or two proposed locations.

We felt that our issues were understood. The consultation closed on 6 April 2015. The Patient Group will be keen to learn the outcome and will let you know.

GP Premises Update

Unfortunately the wheels are grinding a bit slowly in terms of premises improvement and expansion.

The practice is becoming a teaching practice so additional consulting rooms are required for a GP trainee and for the increasing number of patients, which will of course grow further with the new housing development in Biggar.

The practice needs the support of NHS Lanarkshire for all premises work so we are working with the practice and NHS Lanarkshire to ensure that we see progress in the near future.

Practice Photo Board

You may be pleased to know that we have asked that the practice displays a photo board of all those staff that work in the practice, this will assist you in familiarising yourself with names and faces. The board will be placed in the waiting room and photos will also be displayed on the practice website.

Please remember your views are always welcome which you can pass to Donald Stewart in the practice or email:

biggarhealth@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk

News and Information Provided by the Practice

Dates for your diary

Friday 3 April 2015	Closed Easter Friday
Monday 6 April 2015	Closed Easter Monday
Monday 4 May 2015	Closed Public Holiday
Monday 25 May 2015	Closed Public Holiday
Wednesday 17 June 2015	Staff Training
Monday 20 July 2015	Closed Public Holiday
Wednesday 9 September 2015	Staff Training
Monday 28 September 2015	Closed Public Holiday
Wednesday 21 October 2015	Staff Training
Friday 25 December 2015	Closed Christmas Day
Monday 28 December 2015	Closed Public Holiday
Friday 1 January 2016	Closed New Years Day
Monday 4 January 2016	Closed Public Holiday
Wednesday 20 January 2016	Staff Training
Wednesday 16 March 2016	Staff Training

The practice will close between 1.00-6.00pm on the above staff training days and will re-open at 6.00pm for the extended hours surgery.

Did you Know?

Over 1,500 patients use the online services which enable you to check book and cancel appointments. You can also check and order your repeat medication and send a message to the practice about your medication.

If you do not have access to the internet you can access online services via a digital Television or Mobile Phone.

Further details and frequently asked questions are available from the practice website or from reception.

Contact the Practice

Reception	01899 220383
Fax	01899 229525
District Nurses	0300 303 2445
Health Visitors	01555 667176
Physiotherapy	0845 6040001
Podiatry	01555 667150
NHS24	111

bmp@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk

Twitter: @biggarmedicalpractice

Fact: Bowel Cancer can often be cured if detected early: www.getcheckedearly.org.uk

Visit our website for lots of info and advice:
www.biggarmedicalpractice.co.uk

Sign up for the text messaging service to be reminded of your appointments and important information.

When the practice is closed and you can't wait until it reopens call NHS24 free on 111.