

Hepatitis B

Enclosed is a response from the BMA following the LMC request for clarification over charging. The LMC still receives queries about charges for Occupational Health reasons and suggests you can make reciprocal arrangements with neighbouring practices. We are enquiring with the four PCTs if a Local Enhanced Service could be provided.

Violent Patients - Out-of-Hours

The LMC would like to remind you that you are not obliged to see these individuals when working out-of-hours. We continue to press PCTs to have suitable arrangements in place and for informing services and practices about them.

Coeliac Prescribing - Coeliac UK

Please note that there is a prescribing guide available at www.coeliac.co.uk. The LMC declined a PCT request to be involved in drawing up a local "limited" list of foods. We felt that the extra workload for GPs to vet prescriptions was burdensome and hope our dietician and gastroenterology colleagues instruct the patients appropriately.

PCT Protocol for Locum Payments

All Practice Managers should have been e-mailed a copy of the Protocol for Locum Payments. Please be aware that the criteria for

payments are very restricted and you should not cancel your Locum Insurance unless your remaining list size per partner is as stated.

The GPC is aware that these payments are very poor and they have been mandated to improve them with the D of H. Practices with salaried GPs should also consider locum insurance for them.

Model PMS Agreement

Lockharts Solicitors have updated their Model PMS Agreement. One copy is available for inspection at the LMC Office and we can e-mail an explanatory letter from Lockharts upon request.

Low Cost Microsoft Office Programmes for NHS Staff

NHS staff are being offered licensed copies of select Microsoft Office programmes, for use at home, for as little as £17 compared to the usual cost of about £400. Further information is available at www.nhs.uk/def/pages/inform/informish18/p6.asp#microsoft .

Certificates for Students who are absent for exams

The exam season is upon us and the inherent requests for notes to excuse students who are ill. Attached is a letter outlining this matter from the Joint Council for General Qualifications. It has been forwarded by a Stafford GP and the LMC is always happy to

share useful letters or ideas in the newsletter. The letter may be helpful where schools are making excessive requests.

Focus on ... Guidances

The latest ones available on the BMA website

[www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/content/ HubGMScontractguidance](http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/content/HubGMScontractguidance) are:

- Focus on ... Out of Hours
 - Focus on ... Private Practice
 - Focus on ... Sale of Goodwill
 - Focus on ... Cash to accruals conversion factor
 - Focus on ... Salaried GPs
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Insurance for IT Equipment

PCTs are now responsible for providing new IT equipment and therefore their insurance. This will normally mean they will replace their equipment that is stolen or damaged. However, equipment owned by practices will still need to be insured until a policy is agreed by the GPC and Dof H.

Update on patient experience section (QOF)/Patient

There still seems to be some confusion in relation to the patient surveys in the QOF despite an update in the GMS2 Update of 24 April 2004 produced by the General Practitioners Committee.

The problem has arisen because it was not made explicitly clear that the IPQ survey is copyright, although the copyright is clearly marked on the specimen IPQ survey questionnaires as published.

The other approved patient survey is also subject to copyright but this is waived in certain circumstances. Please see www.gpaq.info for explanation of these conditions.

The CFEP organisation that produces the IPQ questionnaire wrote to PCTs on 24 February 2004 to alert practices that unauthorised copying of the IPQ questionnaire is a breach of copyright. However, it also stated that practices had to use the CFEP survey analysis service to qualify for QOF payments.

This last statement is not strictly true. CFEP includes an analysis of service as part of the cost of their questionnaires, although if practices choose to analyse the IPQ themselves they are free to do so and this would qualify for QOF payments.

Practices are reminded that unauthorised copying of IPQ or GPAQ is a breach of copyright whoever does the analysis. Practices should not photocopy the questionnaires from the contract supporting documentation or from the BMA or NHS Confederation website.

CFEP will produce certificates for practices to show that IPQ has been properly and legally administered.

JCGQ Attachment

Joint Council for General Qualifications (JCGQ) Regulations

Evidence in Support of Requests for Special Consideration

Thank you for your letter enquiring about medical evidence in support of requests for special consideration for candidates who are absent for examinations.

The JCGQ's concern is to ensure that if a candidate misses an examination and special consideration is requested, the reason for the absence is genuine illness, in order to be fair to all candidates.

The JCGQ regulation states that the school "must provide medical or other appropriate evidence in all cases of absence." Where a candidate is unwell but not ill enough to warrant a visit to the GP, it is acceptable for evidence to be provided by the Head of Centre.

We do not insist on medical evidence under the following circumstances:

- If the candidate attends the examination and the illness is obvious to centre staff.
- If the candidate was sent home from school clearly unwell or was seen to be unwell when last in the school.
- If there is a general outbreak of viral illness within the school community and individual candidates are known to be becoming unwell.
- If the candidate misses a unit which can be re-taken at a later session of examinations.
- If the candidate was prescribed medication and has a label from the bottle or packet bearing the date on which the prescription was given and the name and address of the candidate.

In cases of absence for which the centre can provide no verification, medical notes will still be required under current regulations.

I hope this answers your query.

HOW TO APPLY FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

1. The Head of centre is responsible for the submission of a request for special consideration and must be satisfied that the case is genuine.
 - 1.1. Submit the request to the awarding body on the official form JCGQ/SC (see pages 70/71) as soon as possible after the examination and not later than 7 days after the date of the last component in the specification/syllabus concerned.
 - 1.2. Submit a separate application form for each constituent subject of combined-subject specifications/syllabuses.
 - 1.3. In the case of partial absence, details of candidates estimated to be of comparable standards must be given for each subject.
 - 1.4. For any application relating to coursework components centres will be required to submit a breakdown of marks with the special consideration request form.
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Text of BMA response to Hepatitis B

CHARGING FOR HEPATITIS B

Further to your recent letter on charging for Hepatitis B, I have taken advice internally and the following guidance will appear shortly in 'focus on ... Private Practice'. The text is currently in draft form, but I do not anticipate it changing much.

"CAN YOU PLEASE CLARIFY THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO HEPATITIS B VACCINATION - CAN GPs CHARGE FOR IT?"

The vaccinations schedule has been carried across from the Red Book. Different Health Authorities have traditionally taken a different view as to what Infectious Hepatitis is - some would only reimburse for Hepatitis A vaccination whereas some other PCTs would reimburse Hepatitis B vaccination as well. Where PCTs previously provided Hepatitis B vaccination on the NHS then doctors should continue to provide it on the NHS. Where there was no previous reimbursement, doctors can charge for Hepatitis B vaccination for those seeking the vaccination for travelling abroad.

WHAT ABOUT CHARGING FOR HEPATITIS B VACCINATION FOR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH REASONS?

GPs increasingly face patients requesting Hepatitis B for occupational reasons because they are dental nurses or about to enter medical school. GPs cannot, under Schedule 5, charge for Hepatitis B in these circumstances. However, neither does a GP need to provide them under essential or additional services. Such patients can either seek vaccination privately (e.g. through a travel clinic) or, as would be most suitable for those about to embark on training/work within the NHS, through an occupational health Hepatitis B Local Enhanced Service where this can be negotiated with the PCT.

This is the best advice that we can offer at the moment.

I hope this is helpful

Yours Sincerely

Matther Ison
Principal Executive Officer