

# TOTTON HEALTH CENTRE DR WOOD & PARTNERS NEWSLETTER SPRING 2007

**Tel: 023 8086 5051**

Our first Newsletter, issued 6 months ago, was well received by patients. We hope you found it both useful and informative.

Ongoing changes in general practice, often dictated by government policies, mean we continually have to re-evaluate the way we deliver care in the community. This newsletter will, we hope, explain some of the current issues and also changes that are happening here at Dr. Wood & Partners (Totton Health Centre).

## Dr Wood's Retirement



After 38 years practising as a GP in Totton our senior partner, Dr. Terry Wood, will be retiring on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2007.

Terry has led our team with enthusiasm and dedication through many changes and developments in general practice over that time, whilst always maintaining a warmth and sense of humour.

He will be sadly missed by not only the practice team, but also by the many patients he has helped over the years.

We would like to wish Terry and his wife, Margaret, a long, enjoyable and well earned retirement.

However, we are delighted that we will not be losing Terry's services as a GP for good. Our patients may well be seeing him again in the practice from time to time, as it is likely he will carry out some locum GP work for the team when necessary.

We have appointed a replacement partner to take Dr. Wood's place. Please watch the notice board or our website for full details in due course.

It is intended there will be a seamless changeover on July 1<sup>st</sup>; this is when we plan for the new partner to take over the care of Dr. Wood's patients.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding these plans, do not hesitate to contact the practice manager.

### **Dr Wood continued:-**

A "Farewell" Message Book will be placed in reception during May.

Any patient wishing to express their best wishes or thanks to Dr. Wood in this book will be very welcome to do so.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July (despite his protests that he is far too young to be called "senior"!) we will, of course, have a new senior partner – Dr. Malcolm Darch!

Malcolm will already be known to many of you as he has been with the practice for many years. He is an enthusiastic grand-dad and Saints season ticket holder!

Malcolm takes over as senior partner at a difficult time for general practice. However, following in Dr. Wood's footsteps, he will continue to steer the practice in the same family friendly, but efficient manner.

In other words –

***"Business As Usual"!***

## **The Value of UK General Practice**

The new GP contract was introduced in full in April 2004, following lengthy negotiations and full agreement by all parties. Ministers spoke in public about the intended value of the contract and the fact that practice income in the new contract was to be largely based around a performance-based income stream.

In recent months, general practice seems to have been under attack

from misleading reports, particularly in the media, that GPs are overpaid and not pulling their weight.

We feel this is unfair and inaccurate.

GPs attracted additional resources by demonstrating (1) that they deliver high quality care and (2) they complete a range of work across specific areas identified by the government. Achievements by GPs were significantly higher than the government had anticipated. As a practice, we took pride in achieving this high quality care and feel that it is a tribute to the work of the doctors, nurses and administrative staff at the Health Centre that we performed well.

Although GP income did rise following the introduction of the new contract, GPs remain excellent value for money. In 2005/6, the cost of each face to face GP consultation compared very favourably with other NHS costs. Increasingly, GPs are providing services which used to be done in hospitals - minor surgery, joint injections, warfarin monitoring - at a much lower cost to the NHS.

NHS deficits are not due to the GP contract. Financial problems in the NHS are, in fact, a result of many factors including targets, reforms, inefficiencies and structural problems.

We believe that levels of patient confidence and trust in GPs remain high.

We work hard to preserve those beliefs and hope you support us in our aims to deliver high quality care to you all.

## **New ways of delivering clinical care to patients**

### **Practice Based commissioning (PBC)**

The Department of Health sees PBC as a way to commission services more efficiently than they are currently delivered. In Totton, all three practices are working as one locality group for PBC purposes.

Progress has been made in Totton with certain services e.g. the reduction of dermatology referrals into the hospital system, by increasing expertise within the surgeries themselves.

However, development of PBC services requires time and investment from both clinical and management areas. This is an ongoing process. However, we want to reassure you that we, as GPs, are trying to develop PBC within the Totton locality.

### **Information and Technology**

Three major IT projects currently affecting general practice are choose and book, electronic transfer of prescriptions and the national care record.

These government initiatives are still in their infancy. GPs are trying to cope with these altered ways of working and trying to evaluate whether the changes that have been asked of us, will actually enhance patient care.

## **Patient Survey 2006/7**

Prior to Christmas, some of our patients were asked to complete a questionnaire about the service and care they received at the practice.

This year's data is back and we are pleased to report we achieved excellent results.

Our patient expectations are, quite rightly, high and our survey results go some way to proving that we are making the very best endeavours to meet these demands.

Questions varied from how patients felt they were treated by the reception team, through to the patient's experience with the doctor and their overall views about the surgery.

Individual comments highlighted patient's experiences

- 'The care for our children provided by the practice is second to none'
- 'Efficiency , professionalism and accuracy of diagnosis by the GPs inspires confidence and peace of mind in the patients'
- 'I believe I am fortunate to belong to a very good practice'
- 'All the staff are really caring'

### Patient survey cont:-

Areas where further review and discussion were felt to be appropriate:-

- Improvement to telephone access
- Reviewing the appointment system
- Reviewing opening hours

Our thanks go to everyone who took the time and trouble to complete the questionnaire.

It has certainly been helpful in reinforcing the message that our care as a primary care team and the service we provide is generally appreciated and thought to be of a high standard.

We will, of course, continually review the service we provide and endeavour to respond to patient needs and views.



We are continuously looking at ways to improve our appointment system to make it as efficient and accessible as possible and - as a direct result of patient feedback - we have introduced appointments that are pre-bookable up to 2 weeks in advance.

Approximately fifty percent of our appointments are now available to pre-book.

We will though still keep back approximately fifty percent of the appointments until the day, in an effort to try and make us available for more acute, urgent problems, which we know patients also want.

Unfortunately, one downside to these changes is that since introducing the pre-bookable slots we have noticed a rise in patients not turning up for appointments. We do please urge you to phone if you are running late or unable to attend, so we can make the appointment available for someone else.

As an example, in February 2007 we lost over 78 GP and 149 nurse appointments due to patients not attending!

Telephone consultations with both our nurses and doctors can be a very efficient way to deal with many problems and save a trip down to the surgery. If you are uncertain if you need to be seen, it is worth enquiring if a telephone consultation may be suitable. These can be booked in advance or on the day.

At busy times – 8.30 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. - we know it can be difficult to get through to the surgery.

If you are phoning for results or something non urgent, we ask you to leave it until later in the morning when our phone lines are usually much quieter. We understand that no system can be perfect for everyone and we are doing our very best to implement changes to try to make us as efficient as we possibly can.

## Getting an appointment cont:-

Unfortunately, even GPs and Health Centre staff can sometimes be poorly. This means, at times, the practice may be over-stretched to meet patient demands, despite our best efforts.

We appreciate your patience and understanding at these busy times. We will continue to monitor our appointment system regularly and would welcome any feedback you have.

## Seasonal Health Tip



### Tick bites

– are relatively common in the New Forest. Only a minority lead to someone contracting Lyme disease.

Remember:

- Wear appropriate clothing in 'ticky' areas
- Inspect skin regularly and remove any attached ticks
- Remove ticks by gently gripping as close to the skin as possible with e.g. tweezers and pulling steadily away from the skin
- Creams, jelly or oils to cover an attached tick are **not** recommended
- Antibiotics are not routinely recommended after a tick bite
- A spreading red rash around the bite site 5-15 days after the bite may need medical attention.

## HAYFEVER

Patients requiring repeat scripts for their annual medication – please put in a written request. If you need advice regarding a hay fever prescription please arrange for a nurse or doctor telephone consultation.

## Surgery opening times

- Surgery Opening Hours
- Mon – Friday 8.30-6pm (Except Mon lunchtime 1-2pm: closed for staff training)
- Emergency on call Doctor available from 8am -6.30pm
- Home visit requests – please phone before 12 noon
- Blood or other test results – please phone between 10-12.30pm
- Prescriptions require 48hrs to be processed (excluding weekends)

**The surgery telephone number is 023 8086 5051**

- Remember Monday mornings are the busiest time –avoid routine calls in this period.
- We really do try and accommodate your requests for advice, appointments and visits.
- We have a very committed team of doctors, nurses, reception staff, IT support staff and secretarial staff.

We are trying to provide you with a full range of medical services. We hope this holistic approach provides a good service to you and your families.

## **NEWS FLASH!**

**Don't forget to keep checking our website. Information about the practice is continually updated.**

**[www.tottonhealthcentre.co.uk](http://www.tottonhealthcentre.co.uk)**