



Newsletter

March 2014

The view from the Chair

Foremost in my thoughts is my gratitude to the members of the current committee for their outstanding work during 2013–14, especially since our active numbers have been reduced in recent months on account of serious personal circumstances. Our AGM will take place on Monday, 10th March 2014, after the refreshment break during the next quarterly meeting. All members have been contacted by email, text or via the website asking for nominations to the committee for 2014–15. For interesting, challenging voluntary work then look no further!

Please consider contributing to our work, to whatever degree you can manage, either through a small regular commitment or by lending your support to occasional events. With your involvement we would be able to broaden our range of activities among Charter patients and to extend our contribution to the planning and monitoring of health and social care services across the city.

An example of what we do is described in this edition of the Newsletter, under the heading 'CCG Commissioning Intentions'. We are also represented on the governing body of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove, which is to be launched in March just prior to it becoming autonomous and independent. The first local Healthwatch public event is being planned and more details will be available at our Charter meeting on 10th March. For some time now, two of our members have been actively working within the network

of patient participation groups, which is currently organising its second annual conference, with national speakers, in the city on Wednesday, 30th April 2014.

One way to find out about public events is to visit the Charter Patient Group (PG) pages at www.chartermedicalcentre.co.uk by navigating from the home page. We also place paper copies of relevant information on our PG table in the waiting room. I am also pleased to let you know that both the practice and the PG will have a live Facebook page before long.

The Charter practice continues to develop its facilities and care for its growing number of patients (see 'News from the practice' below), and we help whenever we can. Currently, three committee members are working with the practice to interpret the results from the recent patient survey and draw up the action plan for 2014–15. Some of the topics for our quarterly meetings are suggested through discussion within the clinical team, and one GP is always present to answer any specialist questions.

On a more leisurely note, the walking group that we started in May 2013, in conjunction with Brighton and Hove Healthwalks, is now a weekly event. All Charter patients are welcome to join us for a walk and a chat, and tea in the cafe afterwards. The walk is varied to enable those recovering from illness, or of limited mobility, to take part. Meet us outside the

cafe in St Ann's Well Gardens at 1.00 p.m. on any Monday.

We would like to do more but, in common with all volunteers, we have limited time. Please consider joining us.

Clare Tikly, Chair

Forthcoming meetings

Charter PG AGM

The Charter PG AGM will be on Monday 10th March 2014 at Charter Medical Centre from 6.45 to 8.30 p.m.

Before the usual AGM business, which will start at 7.45 after a break for refreshments, we will have a speaker from South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAmb). Jean Gaston-Parry is the public governor for Brighton and Hove SECAmb NHS Foundation Trust and she and a colleague from SECAmb will speak about the ambulance service and the NHS 111 service, which is also run by SECAmb.



There will also a brief introduction to the Fed Centre for Independent Living, a user-led organisation that promotes independent living for all. The centre works towards equality by inspiring disabled people to identify barriers and define solutions.

Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) public meetings

A full public meeting of the CCG governing body takes place every two

months. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 25 March 2014 from 2.00 to 5.00 p.m. at the Brighthelm Centre in North Road, Brighton. You can submit a question to the governing body (at least six working days in advance of the meeting) by emailing: BHCCG.GovBodySec@nhs.net or by writing to The Governing Body Secretary, Level Three, Lanchester House, Trafalgar Place, Brighton BN1 4FU.

Charter PG web pages

As mentioned in the View from the Chair, the Charter PG has a set of web pages that you can access by going to the Charter Medical Centre website. On the 'Useful NHS links' page you will find links not only to our local NHS organisations but also to national bodies that advocate for better patient care and promote patient participation.

One of these is The Patients Association, a healthcare charity that advocates for better access to accurate and independent information for patients and the public; equal access to high-quality health care for patients; and the right for patients to be involved in all aspects of decision making regarding their health care. By becoming a cost-free 'E-Supporter' of the Patients Association you can receive a copy of a free weekly email news round up that will keep you up to date with the latest issues, such as Nick Clegg's launch of a new Mental Health Action Plan, and the care.data database that has been in the news recently (see 'Sharing your data' below).

What we have been doing

As always, your committee has been busy attending meetings intended to involve the public in current and future developments

in health services in Brighton and Hove. We report on two of these here.

CCG Commissioning Intentions

Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has published an outline of its spending plans until 2015 in a booklet called 'Commissioning Intentions'. Members of Charter Patient Group attended most of the public consultations and have reported in earlier editions of this newsletter. Two of us took part in the most recent consultation workshops and chose to focus on provision for mental health care among children and young adults. We were able to contribute from our experiences as teachers and as parents.

We strongly support the emphasis to be given to early intervention: how essential it is to recognise difficulties and intervene with appropriate help for individuals before their needs become more serious and complex. Teachers in schools and colleges, GPs, youth workers, parents and carers need to know which services and support groups are available and how to access them. Training should be provided for those without specialist knowledge and there must be more willingness to acknowledge that mental health needs are often invisible, especially in busy institutions with a range of priorities. Examples of such unrecognised and unmet needs were discussed during the workshop.

We listened with interest to professional health and care professionals from a range of specialist support groups, each with their own working practices and ways of reaching out to children and young people who could benefit from their expertise. There are various routes of referral to these services and support groups, and a need for more publicity

through social media. Where this has become established there is more self-referral taking place. The discussion highlighted the sensitivities of those who are likely to be feeling confused, isolated and unable to recognise their needs or seek help. There is a need to raise awareness and open discussion among the public so that any stigma related to mental health problems does not deter referrals for support.

The commissioners are devising strategies to ensure that mental health needs among children and young adults can be met more effectively, with safety and confidentiality built into procedures. Outcomes from services must be openly monitored, especially when services are working together, and the overall strategy must be sustainable.

As the workshop came to an end we felt that the challenges ahead are well understood by the commissioners and that there is caring, innovative expertise available among the professional health and care workers whom we met. We plan to follow the progress of the strategies being developed, and to view their implementation during this period of reduced funding overall.

CCG Network meeting

Two of our committee members attended the January meeting of the CCG Network, which focussed on two issues.

Firstly, a snapshot survey of how the PPG network is growing and developing across the city had highlighted several problematic issues that PPGs are experiencing. These included 'raising awareness of their existence within their patient base', 'how to extend community engagement' and 'liaison difficulties' between themselves and their respective practices. Charter PG, however, is

pleased to report that we have the full support of our medical practice and have even been identified by the CCG as an 'area forum model'!

Clinician Margaret Felton then gave an inspiring talk about cancer screening services in Brighton and Hove. Her message was quite clear: the occurrence of all types of cancer, including breast, cervical, bowel and prostate, is on the rise (especially as we are all living longer) and it is vitally important to attend any cancer screening appointments you are offered. Her sobering statistics revealed that almost one-third of all deaths across our city in 2012 were cancer related. In response, Brighton and Hove CCG has revamped its screening and public information programme. Nationally, for example, breast screening is now offered to women over 70. For more information on what is available please visit www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk.

Sharing your data

There has been much talk in the news recently about a new information system called care.data. This will extract anonymised data from your medical records so that it can be used 'to get a complete picture of what is happening across health and social care and to plan services according to what works best.' Every household should have received a leaflet through the door, entitled 'Better information means better care', but it would have been easy to throw this away with the pizza delivery leaflets. If you would like to know more then the NHS Choices website is a good place to start. You can download a copy of the leaflet from the website or if you prefer you can call the dedicated patient information line on 0300 456 3531 or use the textphone number 0208 742 8620.

It is important not to confuse this new system with the Summary Care Record, which ensures that emergency doctors and nurses have access to essential information about you when you contact them when the surgery is closed. Initially, this contains only information on your medications and allergies. Again, you can search for more detail on NHS Choices.

News from the practice

New computer system

On 24th February the practice switched to a new clinical database system. It will take a while to get up to speed as there is a lot for all the staff to learn, but the new system should be much more efficient for staff and patients so please bear with them if there are any teething problems.

The change to the computer system means a change to the online booking system. If you previously used Patient Access you can use your existing username and password to log in to the new SystemOnline site. But if your password is fewer than 8 characters long it will not work, so you will need to visit the surgery to set up new login details. And for those with a smartphone, iOS and Android apps are available.

Reception

The practice has responded to your request for shorter queues at the front desk and on the phones by recruiting more receptionists. This means that the phones will now also be answered at lunchtime. And by the time you read this, refurbishment of the reception area and toilets may well have started. There will be improved disabled access and interactions with the receptionists should be easier with the new layout.