

PATIENTS GROUP

Queen Edith Medical Practice

Patients Participation Group (PPG)

Complementing the Work of the Practice

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NEWSLETTER NO 31: September 2022

Editor – David Blake

I hope you find this newsletter interesting and a special welcome to anyone receiving the newsletter for the first time. Should you wish to join the PPG then please email ppg@alanwilliams.org.uk

The newsletter has been put together using submissions from Claire Surridge QE Practice Manager, Howard Sherriff who is a Patient Governor at Addenbrookes and Alan Williams who is the lead member of the PPG. Many thanks to those who make this newsletter possible.

If you have any requests for items to be included in the next newsletter, please email the PPG.

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1. INTRODUCTION by David Blake, PPG.

The Patients Participation Group (PPG) aims to support the work of the QE practice by offering suggestions and opinions in a constructive manner and put forward ideas on behalf of other patients. Any patient of the QE practice can join the PPG. Further details about the group are at <https://www.queenedithmedicalpractice.co.uk/patient-participation-group>

The PPG produces this newsletter four times per year and endeavours to organise talks on medical issues that may be of interest to patients.

We do want to stress that the PPG is independent of the practice and that the articles in this newsletter as written by PPG members, may not necessarily reflect the views of the practice, unless otherwise stated.

2. PRACTICE NEWS by Claire Surridge, QE Practice Manager.

AUTUMN FLU & COVID BOOSTER VACCINATION PROGRAMME

The practice is currently finalising our plans for the forthcoming autumn flu & covid booster vaccination programme. We will add full details once these plans are finalised, but we can confirm the following (as of 1.9.22):

- The practice will be offering **BOTH** flu and covid vaccines to eligible patients.
- These will be co-administered (given at the same time) wherever possible
- Eligibility for the covid booster is roughly in line with eligibility for flu, but there are a few differences, so there may be instances where a patient is eligible for one, but not the other.
- We have started to send out invitations to eligible patients. Clinics will be held here at the practice. We are inviting patients in clinical priority order, starting with those aged 75 and over.
- Those with a mobile telephone number recorded, will be sent a text message containing a link for you to be able to book directly into one of our clinics here at the practice. For those patients without a mobile phone, we will be calling and/or sending letters inviting you to book.
- **We have over 3000 eligible patients and are inviting patients in clinical priority order, this will take time so please bear with us and do not contact the practice until you have received your invitation.**

STAFF NEWS

We have welcomed some additional doctors to the practice in August.

Dr Judith Shelley joined us as a Salaried GP, working all day Tuesday & Wednesday. She is a very experienced GP having previously worked at practices in Suffolk before moving to Cambridge.

Dr Ronak Patel & Dr Adrian Hucks have joined us for a year as GP Registrars (Trainee GPs). A GP Registrar is a fully qualified doctor who has decided to make general practice their speciality. They will have spent at least two years working in a hospital before joining the practice and are closely supervised by a senior GP.

3. NEWS FROM THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL TRUST by Howard Sherriff, Patient Governor Addenbrookes.

It is recognised that the healthcare systems including NHS are under severe stress. A combination of Covid, flu, and poor weather are likely this year. The Covid cases in Addenbrookes were 21 in the previous week and 34 in last 7 days. Nationally there is a slight surge but not expected to be overwhelming. However Covid is still around in Cambridgeshire and infection rate is 1 in 70 of population. Modelling indicates it is plateauing in London and South East.

The next infection expected is the winter flu. Vaccinations are being made available and Staff are being offered this. By October the general population will be offered this via their GP. The Winter pressures are likely to be significant with increased emergency department attendances, so the Trust is planning a fourth mobilisation in advance. The unknown is the weather and this can significantly affect the emergency attendances. Large gatherings such as festivals and football matches are likely to contribute to increased numbers.

Rapid testing has been developed for flu and other respiratory illnesses. The new plans include some patients being treated in virtual wards at home.

The new Hospitals on site for Cancer and Children are going ahead as planned. The Cancer Hospital building is due to start next year.

4. POLARIS PHARMACY

If you receive a prescription from the Queen Ediths Medical Center and use the QE pharmacy, you will see that the name of the pharmacy has changed from Kays to the Polaris Pharmacy. Husband and wife Pharmacists Loh and Gina Liu have become the owners of the Polaris Pharmacy since the beginning of September.

Both Loh and Gina have been pharmacists in Nottingham for several years and decided to open their own pharmacy. As well as being a Dispensing Pharmacist, Loh has also run sleep clinics where he could prescribe as well as dispense. Standard NHS services will remain the backbone of the Polaris Pharmacy but the intention of the two new Pharmacists is to add extra services that are not currently offered by the NHS. The Polaris Pharmacy is intending to introduce for example sleep and travel clinics and various tests and inoculations on a private basis. A new website will be developed over the winter months where full details of the additional services that can be delivered, will be described. In the immediate future, the Polaris Pharmacy have managed to obtain through the NHS, 800 doses of flu vaccine. If you have difficulties in obtaining a flu jab, the Polaris Pharmacy can assist.

The Pharmacy opening hours will remain as they are currently. A new sign announcing the Polaris Pharmacy will be installed. All the existing staff that you are familiar with, will continue although there is currently a vacancy for a Pharmaceutical Assistant; if interested please call-in at the Pharmacy.

Loh and Gina intend to develop their Pharmacy in the future whilst continuing to provide an excellent local dispensing facility for residents of Queen Ediths. They are both very helpful and along with the staff will endeavour to offer advice and support.

5. HEALTHCARE SNIPPETS by Alan Williams PPG.

In recent weeks there have been many announcements in health related newsletters which show how much work is going on and which may have impacts on us. Three of them relate to dementia. I have also selected some other interesting clips.

Dementia including Alzheimer's Disease

For some twenty years it has been generally assumed that amyloid clusters in the brain are a likely cause of the observed symptoms of Alzheimer's and research has sought to find drugs which interfere with this process. To date there have been some which have very limited effects, but failure after failure of candidate drugs. Now, a deep review of the work about the amyloid hypothesis has suggested that it is a poor explanation and could even be bogus. There was a big article in the Sunday Times on 21st August about this.

Dementia is often thought to be a condition of people over 70 but the charity Dementia UK suggests that more cases are appearing in people younger than 65 (perhaps more than 70 thousand people in UK).

A recently reported study with more than 21 thousand patients, conducted in the USA (at a renowned hospital in Boston), has concluded that a daily multivitamin tablet can significantly delay the progress of dementia.

Cancer Testing

There is a major trial going on (not just in UK) called Galleri. This is organised in the UK through the NHS with the help of Cancer Research UK and a group at King's College, London. The trial is evaluating a blood test, from a US company called Grail, which detects genetic material (described by some as a "fingerprint") that leaches into the circulation from cancer cells almost anywhere in the body. My wife and I are signed up on the trial with about 140,000 other people in UK. We have been tested once but (as is good practice) we do not know if we are in the "control" group or the "active" group. Only the blood from the latter is tested now and anything deemed to be "suspicious" may be investigated further; the control group's samples are kept. Later, the control group's samples may be compared with the others (there may be differences for many reasons). We gave our first samples in January and we expect to be called twice more.

Childhood Vaccinations

The WHO (World Health Organisation) has reported that childhood vaccinations have declined in recent years by more than at any time in 30 years. This appears to be an international phenomenon. DTP3, HPV and measles dropped in every region in 2021. DTP3 is diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough) and tetanus; HPV is Human Papilloma Virus (implicated in various cancers around the body that are linked to sexual transmission), measles you will know about. The Director of UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) said "this is a red alert for child health". Parents and grandparents should be aware of the risks of inadequate vaccination in children.

Many thanks

David