

Christmas Newsletter

The year is almost over and after 8 CET events and more meetings than ever we are poised for an interesting 2016. I wanted to take the opportunity to bring you up to date on a few matters before we enjoy the Christmas break.

Evolutio payments

Firstly, thank you for sending us the information about your payments outstanding. We have now had verbal responses from both CCG's. Both are working to speed up payments as you may already have noticed. Having had meetings with the West and East commissioners along with Peter Price-Taylor several reasons for the delays have emerged including:

- The lag between activity and invoicing.
- There is a need to wait for cataract referral payments due to the delay in getting confirmation that the referral has been accepted onto the surgery list by the hospital.
- The contract with Evolutio is a block contract which takes no account of seasonal variances adversely affecting cash flow. Since November payments have increased as the cash flow has improved.
- Rejected cataract referrals are running at high numbers which I will discuss in more detail later.
- Those with bad invoicing are affecting those with good practices as invoices are taken in date of activity.
- A large multiple submitted invoices for 9months work in 1 go.

I have seen some of the invoices which are unclear and don't even add up which is probably a sign of us generally being a till transaction profession rather than invoicing. Even though Evolutio is a private company the money is from the public purse for which every penny must be accounted for. The option of separate invoices for ESO work and pre-cataract work is being explored as with the loss of the Nuffield as a provider the waiting time will increase leading to longer waits for cataract payments. The ESO and post cataract work is fairly straight forward to validate and should make that part of the payment consistent.

An Excel sample invoice is available on the Evolutio website and please ensure only one month's activity is on each invoice and only submit one invoice each month.

Cataract referrals

The number of cataract referrals being rejected from the hospitals is a hot topic currently with some practices running at 12% which is a fair number of patients in the larger practices. The CCG's and consultants understand despite our counselling some will change their mind but the issues are:

- Referral forms being countersigned rather than being seen by an accredited Optometrist
- VA on referral is poorer than that measured at the HES
- Patients not understanding the risks prior to attending the HES

This issue and the difficulty with clear invoicing are putting the universal inclusion in cataract counselling and referral at serious risk especially as the hospitals are looking at the option of one stop cataract surgery which will fall flat if the patient turns up and decides they don't want surgery.

So please ensure the patient meets the thresholds, wants surgery if offered and is seen for form completion by an accredited Optometrist.

In the New Year the accreditation process will change whether referral remains inclusive or becomes exclusive and will involve more focused education and feedback. There will be 2 accreditation events in the first quarter of 2016; I will confirm the dates early next month.

Enhanced Services

The two sides of the county have different challenges and probably wisely have decided to pursue different models.

East Suffolk- We believe the whole Ophthalmology service will be changing providing opportunities for interested Optometrists with services within and extra to core competencies. The actual design has not been confirmed but should be clear early next year.

West Suffolk- The West of the county have less acute problems and are more about planning for demographic changes over the next 5-10 years. New pathways are being explored that would involve Optometrists interested doing something different. The LOC are at the core of discussions and will fight to maintain inclusiveness whilst keeping options open for more advanced roles.

Early in the New Year we hope to be able to discuss the options for enhanced services in the future face to face with you. I hope you agree the importance of getting involved in the debate as once the opportunity has passed we could be left out in the cold.

GOS forms

GOS Forms for Suffolk practices are still ordered from St Clements but the number has changed to- 01473 320902, Fax 01473 320903

LEHN chair

Rupal Lovell-Patel has now been appointed as chair of the Eastern local eye health network. She will be along to one of our CET events to explain more about the health network early in the New Year.

Have a great Christmas and we look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

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