

# Biggar Medical Practice Patient Group Newsletter

Welcome to the 8th edition of our Newsletter – November 2018

## **Flu season: arrangements for 2018**

Those who are over 65, or pregnant or have on-going medical conditions are eligible for free flu vaccination. In 2017 the Practice operated walk-in clinics for the vaccinations. At some times of day this worked very well for patients; at others long queues formed and the parking area became overcrowded and dangerous. For this reason the Practice will operate an appointments system for the 2018-19 flu season. Please make your appointment in the normal way.

The Patient Group will review, in the New Year, how these arrangements have worked.

## **Continuity of care and easy access**

Does seeing the same doctor make a difference? We had an interesting discussion on Exeter University Medical School's review of previous studies about continuity of care. The study found that repeated patient-same doctor contact is linked to fewer deaths. The effect applied across different cultures, and was true not just for family doctors, but for specialists including psychiatrists and surgeons. We understand that the Practice agrees that getting to know each other leads to better communication, patient satisfaction and following of medical advice.

But doctors are not available 24 hours a day and often patients want to be seen the day they phone. Therefore, if the issue is not urgent then arranging to see the doctor you have got to know can be of benefit to both you and the doctor. We understand at the Practice a particular doctor will be the lead GP for a patient, particularly for someone who is ill with a long standing condition. Finding out who that person is can help you know who to ask for. At Biggar Medical Practice we are fortunate there is good team working between all clinical staff, which also helps with the appropriate sharing of patient information.

## **'Work experience' for Biggar High School Pupils.**

Both of the GPs and the Business Manager who came to our meeting suggested that there would be benefit of a small number of senior pupils attending the Practice for work experience. They would gain an understanding of how this essential part of NHS provision works. Pupils would need to demonstrate a genuine interest in pursuing a career in medicine or as an Allied Health Professional. With, and only with, the express consent of individual patients the pupils could attend consultations.

The Practice is keen to encourage those with an interest medicine or an Allied Health Professional career from the local school community, as future recruitment will be a challenge for the service.

The Patient Group saw real benefits in such an arrangement and agreed that, with the necessary focus on confidentiality, such a system could be introduced.

Barbara Duffner and Sarah Sinclair