

For Immediate Release (7th April 2009)

Press release by: General Practitioners Committee West Midlands

GPs are appalled to hear that NHS West Midlands tells local NHS bodies to positively spin about loss of resources to general practices

General Practitioners in the West Midlands have been dumbfounded by the 'NHS West Midlands' telling local NHS bodies (Primary Care Trusts) to give a positive spin on changes in resources for general practices.

Dr Grant Ingrams (1), Secretary of the General Practitioners Committee West Midlands (2), said: "General practices have received less resources year on year for the past 5 years to provide patient services. Further changes to practice resources this year will mean some practices will lose significant amounts of money to support patient care and may have to consider reducing or stopping some patient services."

"The current contract introduced in 2004 did not take into account the wide range of services provided by different practices, and so pressure is caused by a levelling down effect."

A document (3) by the NHS West Midlands tells Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) to 'put a positive spin on this'. In addition it tells PCTs to consider advising practices to merge, even though patients prefer smaller practices and maintaining an ongoing relationship with a particular doctor. Also it suggests changing contracts to an APMS contract, which are normally short term and commercially based.

Dr Grant Ingrams said "NHS West Midlands seems to have forgotten that their role should be in promoting good practice, not forcing mergers and changes in contracts which will not be to the long term benefit of patient care. We should all be celebrating the high quality care that most general practices provide, and work with the few weak practices to facilitate them to improve."

"The NHS West Midlands is reflecting a poorly thought out national policy for general practice. This policy will require practices to spend excessive time meeting 'tick box targets' depersonalising general practice and adversely affecting patient care. Consequences of a target based culture within the NHS has already damaged patient care in hospitals, with Mid-Staffordshire being only the most recent example."

"I hope that in ten years time we do not look back and regret the passing of the personal long-term family doctor."

Ends

Notes for Editors.

- 1 Dr Grant Ingrams is the Secretary of the General Practitioners Committee West Midlands, and is the Senior Partner of The Crossley Practice, Coventry.
- 2 The initial forerunner of the General Practitioner Committee West Midlands was formed in 1975 as a liaison group. It currently acts as a stakeholder group for general practice in the West Midlands drawing membership from Local Medical Committees, the West Midlands Workforce Deanery, and the West Midland Faculty of the Royal College of General Practitioners.
- 3 'Implications for PCTs and their practices of the financial changes to GMS for 2009/10.' NHS West Midlands and NHS Primary Care Contracting, 13 March 2009.

Contact:

Dr Grant Ingrams
Secretary, General Practitioners Committee West Midlands,
36 Harborne Road
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 3DP
Telephone: 07973 630 838
Email: gji@nhs.net