Welcome to Bay Medical Group’s 1st official newsletter

After several months of hard work in the background “Bay Medical Group” came into being on the 1st April 2016. This was a large undertaking and during the process, some changes to the original plans were made. As you know the decision was taken to change the process, we have now planned a staged process that allows us to integrate each Practice whilst offering little or no inconvenience to our patients. “What does that mean to you?”, well on the 1st April 2016 Meadowside Medical Practice and Coastal Medical Group merged to form Bay Medical Group. We expect the remaining surgeries to join us later in the year and we are actively working towards this.

So, what’s been going on? It has been extremely busy with many of the changes happening behind the scenes so please don’t think we are slacking, for instance the finance department not only had year end to manage but also had to plan for a new business to go live on 1st April. Our Urgent Care Teams are working together to see how we can offer a speedier and consistent service throughout the Practice area. Our reception teams are also looking at ways of working that will help speed up arrivals and queries at the desk at Heysham and Morecambe. It is important to say in all our decisions we aim to keep our patients at the centre of our operation.

What’s to come? Changes will be made in stages. One of the main changes behind the scenes to take place will be the merging of the computer systems. The date for the merger of the patient computerised record system is set for September. This date was determined by our supplier and our IT and administrative departments are working hard to ensure it is as seamless as possible.

What does that mean to you? Currently, we are unable to access each others records, so we cannot help patients from Meadowside that ring Coastal to make appointments or vice versa. You still have to book into your GP surgery as you always have. Once the systems are merged, we will be able to offer more flexibility in booking your appointments and assistance with queries.  

Practice web site

We are also developing the new website and it may be a while before it is up and running. It is important that this contains up to date and relevant information. This site when completed, will provide a host of information that is currently shared by the individual sites. We launched the site in April, and some of you will have seen it already. Thank you to all who visited the site and used it to access your individual practice website. Unfortunately, there were unforeseen problems (for instance with ordering prescriptions online) and we made the decision to take it down until we are ready to launch a bigger, better and more informative site. So please watch this space.
Some comments have been received from within our patient community about the merger; such as feelings that this new practice is too big, it will become impersonal and that it will be more difficult to see who you want to see. These are natural and understandable concerns. We would like once again to reassure you that the decision to merge practices was taken in order for us to be in a position to survive in the ever-changing world of the NHS. The Partners at Bay Medical Group want to be able to offer the best service possible to all our patients. We are passionate about building into our appointments “continuity of care” to help patients see their doctor or the same doctor. Unfortunately, we cannot make this happen overnight and it is really important to us that we have your support; please bear with us while we work together to be the best we can be. The Partners firmly believe this is the right path to take to keep the people of Morecambe, Heysham and Lancaster furnished with outstanding care. After discussion with 2 Partners this was their thoughts -

**Dr A Craven, Senior Partner at Meadowside had to say**

“It is early days in the merger and there are many systems to sort out. In the long term we aim to try and maintain continuity of care for people with more chronic illnesses. It will be necessary to make the provision of acute appointments responsive and at times this means people will need to be seen in alternative places and often by our excellent nurse practitioners, nurses and other clinical staff other than doctors. This may be different for some people and may cause worry.

Throughout all these changes we will need to discuss with patients and all our staff and are happy to receive feedback to help us provide the best care we can.”

**Dr A Foster, Lead Doctor for IT at Coastal Medical Group had to say.**

We are constantly looking to improve the service we offer for our patients. We want to continue delivering the kind of service we can all rely on and be proud of despite the NHS being in crisis. Practices are closing up and down the country all the time leaving some members of the public without their surgery. Recruiting GP’s is getting harder because fewer doctors are going into general practice and more GPs are retiring, often spurred to do so by the increasing pressure the profession is being put under.

Coastal Medical Group formed over 10 years ago because there was a crisis heading to the Morecambe Bay area. The smaller practices joining together to form the larger Coastal, this mean’t people could be recruited more effectively and keep the service going in our area.

That crisis is now ready to hit again and we feel strongly that by coming together as one organisation we can ensure that the people of Morecambe, Heysham and Lancaster have a high quality, reliable, caring and proactive general practice for years to come.

We have a vision, and that vision has the best interests of the people in our area at its core. We don’t want people to lose their GP service, so we have taken these steps to ensure that it can weather this storm.

The BMA states ‘we are one profession, we stand together’. I say ‘we are one community, let’s work together’.
Update on comments

On the last newsletter some of our patients raised concerns, below are the actions, where we could make changes, we have. In some cases we are still looking for a solution. We take your comments seriously and where possible action a solution.

Reception Desks

we have been looking at the way the reception works at our Morecambe Health Centre and Heysham Primary Care Centre site, we are beginning to start supporting each other, that will mean help handing out each others prescriptions and assisting each other patients to book in. We are also looking at training some staff to support each other through the current computer systems, this we hope, will help to reduce queues.

Information screens

You asked about our information screens, we looked at the content and removed a lot of the duplication, we have tried to lengthen the time an information clip is on, but obviously if you are called in to see GP there is little we can do. We will, where possible, ensure we have related paper information available.

Queuing at Morecambe Health Centre

As some of you rightly said, when there is a queue at the Coastal desk the entrance door censor continues to register movement and keeps opening the door causing a brisk draught. We have looked at different ways of queuing, unfortunately whichever direction we looked at caused access problems for either the pharmacy or people leaving. We will continue to try and come up with a viable solution.

West End site makeover

It was mentioned that the West End site was starting to look a little stale, we have looked at our program of works and we are now awaiting a quote for bringing the décor more up to date.

We are very grateful to those of you who have completed the questionnaires on the last two editions of this newsletter. Although we have not specifically asked for your feedback in this edition that does not mean that it is not welcome, if you have comments about your practice and its development please don’t hesitate to put pen to paper and send to:

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