

Your good health

Action on mental health in Walthamstow

THE PATIENT group at Addison Road has discussed the need to address issues of mental health and wellbeing. We are currently gathering information about organisations offering such support locally.

The aim is to create a noticeboard in the reception area of the surgery identifying such groups, the help they offer and how to contact them.

To launch this initiative, we will be inviting patients to a mental health and wellbeing café where representatives of local support groups will be on hand to give advice.



Refreshments will, of course, be provided.

When we have finalised the details of our plans we

will let you know more, hopefully by the time of the next newsletter in September. **Patrick Morgan**

New telephone system: your views

YOU MAY have noticed that the practice has a new phone system. When you phone the surgery you now are given a range of options to call. There is also a facility to receive a callback to your phone if you find you are towards the back of the queue and cannot wait.

In view of this the patients group will be conducting a survey to determine how patients get in contact with the surgery or order a repeat prescription. We are keen to understand patients' experience so that we can suggest any improvements that might be possible. We aim to launch the survey later this year.



OUR PHONE NUMBER IS CHANGING!

From 25th March

0208 176 9110



Patients' voices must be heard

VIEWPOINT

Patrick Morgan

Chair, Addison Road patient group



When patient groups were established in 1972, they were intended to give people collectively a voice in the way surgeries were run. At Addison Road, we have had considerable success in influencing our systems and practices.

As time has gone on it is clear that many of the major funding decisions affecting patients are made at a higher level by organisations that have not encouraged the patient voice. In Waltham Forest, as in all boroughs, decisions about which health issues to support and how much support to give were made by the clinical commissioning group. Although there were patient representatives at its meetings, there was no clearly defined system to identify who they represented and, therefore, to whom they reported.

In April this year the commissioning group was disbanded and there is now a new body in charge of funding. It represents a group of north-east London boroughs, although there are local bodies for each borough.

Our new integrated care board (ICB) is responsible, as its title suggests, for ensuring that social care and health work together to ensure wrap around care for all. As well as health and social care representatives, the ICB has many interested parties involved. However, what is missing are representatives from grassroots patient bodies – us.

If you read through the policies of the integrated care boards and the now defunct



clinical commissioning groups you will find statements such as: “Patients are at the heart of all that we do.” My experience of working in our patient group for the last six years is that it has been almost impossible to get our voice heard in their meetings and, as a result, decisions have been made of which patients were unaware or which have had a detrimental impact on service.

The pandemic overshadowed the start of primary care networks that bring together groups of GP surgeries to collaborate in buying resources and staff. (We are in a group with The Firs in Stephenson Road, Claremont in Higham Hill, and two practices on Wood Street: Dr Dhital and Dr Ivbijaro.)

This is a real opportunity to develop a system to involve each network with the new integrated care boards so that we can better understand how funding decisions are made and provide an effective way of getting our voices heard.

As Dr Dhital, clinical lead for our primary care network, explained to a group of patients group chairs recently: “The patient voice can be a real force for change at this level. They [the ICB] cannot afford to ignore it.”

GPs on the golf course? You must be joking

Doctors going missing during the pandemic was a media myth. The reality is very different, writes Dr Janakan Crofton

For many patients, a GP's life fits the narrative painted by mainstream media. Workshy GPs, Part-Time Fat Cats are typical Daily Mail headlines. The reality is you will find doctors burnt out, exhausted, waiting for their next patient armed only with a litre of coffee and a stethoscope.

General practice is in crisis: there is increasing patient demand, coupled with a shrinking and exhausted workforce. Covid-19 has generated a vast backlog, and hospital waiting lists add to the pressure in surgeries.

Nationally, there are 1,608 fewer GPs than there were in 2015, but each practice has on average 2,222 more patients. Sajid Javid, the health secretary has admitted the government cannot recruit the 6,000 extra doctors it pledged by 2025. GPs deal with 90% of patient care but we receive under 10% of the overall NHS budget. You can see that the numbers don't add up.

GPs fulfil more than 1 million appointments every day. But the risk to patients because of doctor fatigue is growing. When I've treated more than 30 patients (25 is the safe recommendation), signed 100 prescriptions, gone through 30+ blood test results, actioned a dozen hospital documents, chaired meetings and supervised junior colleagues and trainees, I'm often left



staring at my screen, barely able to string a sentence together. Don't believe everything you read in the newspapers: a round of golf during my lunch break sounds great, but it never happens.

Clap for NHS Heroes feels like a distant memory. Daily our staff are exposed to abuse and aggressive behaviour. Patients must appreciate that problems with access, speed of response, lack of diagnostic tests, hospital wait times and slow communication are not the responsibility of any one individual. A lack of investment and providing enough staff are the cause. Please remain kind and respectful.

Staff at Addison Road remain positive and aim to deliver on our mission statement: to provide high quality care with integrity, compassion and trust. One of the core values we have identified as an organisation is fun. If you see us delivering care with a smile on our faces, we're not being sloppy; it's in our nature to be happy.

Dr Janakan Crofton joined Addison Road Medical Practice as a partner in January 2020



Meet Alex Kyriakidis: she can help you conquer anxiety

As a health and wellbeing coach, my role is to guide and motivate patients in how to implement and achieve their personal objectives.

Sessions focus on different areas, from lifestyle management (such as promoting healthy habits or weight management), to more emotional matters (anxiety, stress or low motivation).

The main purpose of coaching is to encourage and empower patients. My focus is on self-management: helping patients to discover and understand what they really want, and then guiding them to make positive change.

I look to help people develop knowledge, skills and confidence so that they can

become active participants in looking after their own health. The tools I use are holistic, with a focus on mindfulness-based practices: breathwork, meditation, health coaching and energy management.

I also host group anxiety virtual workshops. They provide a space where people can share and learn helpful tips and techniques to ease the symptoms of anxiety. There are six 45-minute weekly sessions which cover mindfulness, breathing techniques, lifestyle improvements and learning to understand triggers.

Alex Kyriakidis is a health & wellbeing coach working for Walthamstow Central primary care network which includes Addison Road Medical Practice.

Don't miss the patient group AGM

SATURDAY June 25 (at 10.30 am) is the date that has been set for the surgery's patient group's annual general meeting. "It would be great if as many of you as possible could attend at Addison Road," said Patrick Morgan, chair of the group, "but there will also be a Zoom link available."

This is the first opportunity since the pandemic to discuss the work of the patient participation group, to give it its formal title.

"We also need to elect or re-elect the group's officers are elected, specifically the chair [me Patrick Morgan] deputy chair [Corinna Creasy], secretary [Maggie Reeves] and deputy secretary [Vivienne Waterhouse]."

For the Zoom link, email Patrick Morgan on jegarcia.pm@gmail.com

A man walks into a pharmacy ...

Customer: "Have you got anything for complete, total, absolute loss of voice, please"

Pharmacist: "Good afternoon, sir. How can I help you?"
