

## *The reality on the ground*



Dear Colleague

The BMA local medical committees conference was the first opportunity since the new Government took office for GPs across the UK to meet and democratically voice their views on issues affecting the profession.

The debates reflected the harsh reality faced by GPs and patients, in sharp contrast to the lofty pronouncements that continue to emerge from politicians.

**In my conference speech**, I reiterated the plight of general practice, with an exhausted, demoralised and inadequate GP workforce struggling to meet escalating demands, while recruitment and retention plummet.

I urged the Government to address these unsustainable pressures immediately, rather than being distracted by political pipe dreams. I warned that the Government must act swiftly, or it will not only risk failing in its manifesto pledge of recruiting 5,000 more GPs, but also, and more importantly, there is now a serious possibility that pockets of the country could be bereft of a comprehensive GP service.

### **Empower patients**

I offered a number of solutions and strategies, ranging from the overall priority of reducing our intolerable and inappropriate workload and relieving GPs of suffocating overregulation, through to managing demand including empowering patients to self-care and management strategies.

I outlined ways in which we as GPs could take some control ourselves of managing workload, drawing on our toolkit **Quality First: Managing Workload to Provide Safe Patient Care**, as well as the opportunities for practices to work together in networks to provide mutual support.

My speech received extensive media coverage across print and broadcast, further raising public awareness of the serious pressures facing general practice. This included **the BBC** (including BBC Breakfast, Victoria Derbyshire, BBC Radio 4's Today Programme, BBC Radio 5Live, BBC Radio 2 and mentions on Any Questions and the BBC Radio 4 News Quiz), **ITV News**, LBC Radio and **Sky News**.

Print coverage included **The Guardian**, **Independent**, **Daily Telegraph**, **Daily Mail** and The Times. It was also the focus of a recent comment piece in the **Independent**. It featured widely across regional media, with more than 150 online news outlets reporting it as well as 26 BBC regional radio stations and newspapers.

## Conference outcomes

Some of the key resolutions passed at the LMCs conference included:

- The Government must stop using the NHS as a political commodity by fuelling unrealistic expectations of what it can deliver
- The increase in GP workload and work intensity is unsustainable and is leading to an exodus of GPs
- GPs should have the right to take appropriate measures to ensure patient safety if workload becomes unsafe
- GP funding, recruitment and retention should be a first priority for the NHS and medical student perceptions of general practice must be improved
- The Government should work, with the BMA GPs committee to define what is and is not included in GP essential services
- The Care Quality Commission should be decommissioned, with its funding reinvested in frontline services
- NHS 111 has failed and **should be scrapped**
- **The out-of-area registration scheme** has been a disaster and has fragmented patient care and compromised the holistic model of general practice
- Occupational and mental health support services for GPs must be restored.

**Read full details about the conference** or **watch a webcast of my speech**.

Please remember that LMCs represent all GPs – do contact your local office with any views or issues affecting you.

For the latest news please visit our website [www.bma.org.uk/gpc](http://www.bma.org.uk/gpc)

With best wishes

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