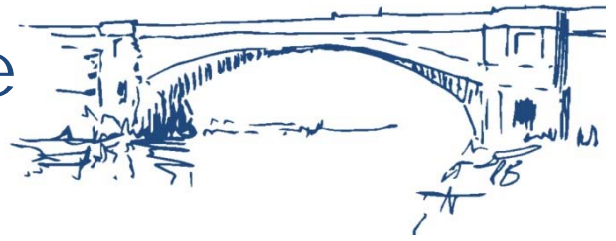


The Alney Practice Newsletter



January 2019

Nº 2

Welcome to our New Year's newsletter. We would like to wish all our patients a happy and healthy 2019. Last year saw many changes at the practice. Alongside the merger of Cheltenham Road Surgery with The College Yard & Highnam Surgery, which in itself created some challenges, we've been effected by a number of staff being absent through illness and bereavement, which has created staffing problems at the practice. While we have done our best to maintain our service using locums, we know that however good they are, continuity is affected and extra strain is put on the GP partners. We certainly aim and hope to have greater continuity in 2019.

As we enter a year of political and economic uncertainty, there is no doubt that further changes will come, providing both challenges and opportunities for us in general practice; nothing stays the same for long in the NHS! The Alney Practice is now in a good position to meet these challenges and to continue to strive to provide the best care for our patients that we are able to.

Dr Helen Miller announces her retirement

Many of our patients who were previously registered at the College Yard and Highnam Surgery will have seen and know Dr Miller. Following her diagnosis of leukaemia in the beginning of July, she has been receiving intensive chemotherapy treatment. Although challenging, this treatment has been effective, and she has now completed and is recovering from the last dose. Throughout the past few months, Dr Miller has remained positive and optimistic about her future, which I am sure has helped to carry her through these difficult times. She has now, however, decided that it is not practical to return to work and has therefore taken the decision to retire. She will not be returning to work at The Alney Practice, and her official retirement will be in April.

Dr Miller joined the practice over 26 years ago, and throughout this time she has worked with passion, energy and enthusiasm, and been keen to explore innovative ways of working to improve the healthcare of her patients. She has shown great care for her patients and staff, and I'm sure will be missed by both alike.

To mark her retirement, I would like to put together a 'Book of Appreciation'. This will be made up of contributions from patients and staff, and could include drawings, paintings, letters, poems, photographs... the only stipulation is that contributions should not be larger than A4 and be single sided. If you would like to contribute, please post your page to me at the Highnam surgery, to arrive by the 12th March.

Adam Beard, Co-practice Manager



Flu Vaccination

If you are eligible but have not yet receive your flu vaccination this winter, it is not too late to do so. If you are aged 65 or over, or have a long-term chronic condition such as diabetes, heart disease or COPD, or are a carer, please call the surgery to book an appointment. For a full list of eligibility criteria, please go to www.nhs.uk and search for "vaccinations".

Focus on *Prescriptions: let's make it work together*

Requesting repeat prescriptions

In order to make the best use of the resources available to us and to ensure that prescription requests are managed as efficiently as possible, we would like to make some changes to how repeat prescriptions are requested. We will soon no longer accept requests by email or fax. While for the time being we will still accept requests using the right hand side of the green paper prescription, as these are planned to be retired in the future, we would like all our patients to move to one of the following two methods:

Prescription Ordering Line (POL)

This is a service supported by NHS Gloucestershire. The Prescription Ordering Line is an easy way to request your repeat medication over the phone. The ordering line is open between 09.00 and 17.00, Monday - Friday (excluding Bank Holidays). Call them on 0300 421 1215. The lines can be busy on Mondays and in the mornings, so avoid these times if you can.



Online requesting

Patient Access is an online portal that allows patients to book, view and cancel appointments, message the reception team and request repeat medication, all from your computer, smartphone or other device. You can register by going to www.patientaccess.com or through the practice website. You will need to bring a form of ID to the surgery to complete the process.



Only request what you need

Medicines wastage costs the NHS hundreds of millions of pounds each year. Please only ask for what you need and do not stockpile medicines in your home. Once medicines have been dispensed to you, they cannot be used by anyone else.

Electronic prescriptions

When the green prescription forms are no longer used, they will be replaced by electronic prescriptions, which can be sent straight from the practice to the pharmacy of your choice. In order for this to work, if you have not already done so, you need to nominate a pharmacy for your prescription to be sent to.



All patients for whom we dispense at Highnam have already had the dispensary nominated for them, and will see no change in how you collect your medication. We are now one of only four practices in the country to be dispensing electronically, putting us at the forefront of this development – thank you for your patience during the changeover in November.

If you have a regular repeat prescription, it may be appropriate to move to electronic repeat dispensing (eRD). This is a way for the surgery to issue up to a year's worth of prescriptions at once (13 times 28 days). The advantage for patients is that you then do not need to request a repeat each time, but just need to inform your nominated pharmacy that you wish to collect your medication each time it is due. Please ask the surgery if you think this would suite you.