Communication to GPs

Industrial Action Wednesday 30\textsuperscript{th} November 2011

You will be aware that a number of Unions have balloted their members for strike action on 30 November 2011. The outcome of these ballots is now known, with members supporting strike action. The proposed strike action is against the National planned changes to Public Services Pension Schemes including the NHS Pension Scheme (NHSPS).

Industrial action will inevitably cause operational difficulties for NHS Grampian in the day to day running of its services and I now wish to inform you of possible implications for GP services.

The overriding aim of NHS Grampian is to maintain the highest standards of patient care and patient safety during any period of industrial action, whilst recognising the individual and collective democratic right of staff to take lawful industrial action.

Whilst we have been preparing for the day of industrial action there is still uncertainty regarding how many staff may choose to take industrial action on the day. This obviously makes planning decisions more difficult. However we have put in place plans that we believe will protect the majority of patient services.

In particular, cancer treatments, renal dialysis services, maternity services, accident and emergency services and existing inpatients have all been protected from the impact of industrial action. All other services will be maintained at a level that can be expected at a weekend as an absolute minimum and in many cases may operate essentially as normal.

At this stage we believe that laboratory services will operate as normal although there may be some minor delays in reporting results. Emergency requests will be processed timeously. The usual specimen collection arrangements can be expected.

There are however two areas that may impact on GPs. Radiology services are likely to be substantially affected by the industrial action. Routine radiology will not be available, but emergency plain film radiology will still be available in the usual way.

The other area of impact is transport for patients. The Scottish Ambulance Service has informed us that emergency transport may be affected. Category A and B calls will still be undertaken as usual, but all other requests (Category C and urgent calls) may be delayed. GPs are asked to request ambulance transport for emergency admissions as usual. The Patient Transport Service will transport oncology, renal and palliative care patients only.
If you have any issues that cannot be resolved by your practice please escalate these through your CHP. These can then be escalated further if necessary.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your cooperation and support during this period of industrial action.

Pauline Strachan  
29th November 2011