1 Swine flu outbreak – important message from your LMC
You will be aware from media coverage that human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) have been reported in Mexico and certain areas of the United States of America. This is an evolving situation and it is likely that more countries will be affected.

We have produced outline guidance which is on our website (http://www.lmc.org.uk/news/news-detail.aspx?dsid=4908). Please note that this is only outline guidance and you must be guided by advice from the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Health Protection Agency (HPA) and the Public Health Department of your PCT.

Our website will be updated on a regular basis and we will keep you informed via regular email alerts.

2 The 2009-10 GMS contract agreement – update from the GPC
You have all received a letter from the General Practitioners Committee (GPC) setting out the details of this year’s modest increase in funding for General Practice (http://www.lmc.org.uk/uploads/files/news/2009/ddrb2009.pdf). The Department of Health (DH) has sent further clarification to Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs), and through them to PCTs, for both GMS and PMS practices (http://www.lmc.org.uk/uploads/files/news/2009/dhdrrbletter3apr09.pdf).

Londonwide LMCs considers the increase in resources for the majority of practices as very unsatisfactory, not least taking into consideration the projected losses for many London practices as a result of QOF prevalence changes. We will continue to lobby for a better deal for London’s GPs and their practice teams.

3 QOF changes – your quick guide!
Here is a quick guide to the latest Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) changes for your information. Our thanks go to Dr James Heathcote from Bromley LMC for this helpful guide.

- **Heart failure:** cautiously try bisoprolol, carvedilol or nebivolol for patients with heart failure due to LVD and on an ACE-i or ARB (or exception report). HF indicator 4, 9 points (threshold 40-60%).

- **CKD register:**
  a) Give an ACE-i or ARB (or exception report) patients on CKD register with hypertension and proteinuria. CKD indicator 5 (extra points awarded) now 9 points (threshold 40-80%).
b) Check the urinary albumin: creatinine ratio or urinary protein: creatinine ratio every 15 months. CKD indicator 6, 6 points (threshold 40-80%)

- **Contraception:** Give advice on long acting reversible contraception (Mirena/Implanon) to female patients on the pill (4 points (threshold 40-90%)) or given emergency contraception (3 points (threshold 40-90%)). SH indicators 2 and 3

- **Depression:** Administer PHQ-9, HADS or BDI-II for a second time after 5-12 weeks for patients with depression. DEP indicator 3 (20 points (threshold 40-90%))

- **Primary prevention:** Do an agreed cardiovascular risk assessment within 3 months of diagnosing hypertension (8 points (threshold 40-70%)) and offer lifestyle advice on physical activity, smoking, alcohol and diet (5 points (threshold 40-70%)). PP indicators 1 and 2, primary prevention of CVD

- **Diabetes:** new, lower HbA1C targets of 7, 8 and 9 %. DM indicators 23, 24 and 25: Indicator 28 existing + 7 new points

- **COPD:** administering the MRC dyspnoea score. COPD indicator 13 (9 points but replaces COPD indicator 13 – inhaler technique (threshold 50-90%))

Further information and advice on read coding is available from the QOF guidance for GMS contract 2009/10 [here](http://www.bma.org.uk/images/gof0309_tcm41-184025.pdf).

4 **Help us to help you!**

Welcome to the second edition of the Waltham Forest newsletter.

As our main form of contact with you will be via electronic communication through e-newsletters and email alerts, we are continuing to collect email addresses and up to date contact details from all of our GPs and practice teams. Whilst we do this we will continue to send you the newsletter in its current paper format. However, we will change to an electronic version in the next few months.

In order to help us to help you, please provide us with your email address as soon as possible, if you have not already done so. You can contact Karen Cooper at the LMC office (kcooper@lmc.org.uk) if you want to make sure that we have your correct details on file. Please remember that all of the information that you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence and is kept securely on our database. This information is solely for our use and we will not share it with third parties. Remember that the newsletter is only one part of an important package of information and support that is available to you from Londonwide LMCs. We have a team of experienced staff who provide essential support to GPs and their practice teams on a daily basis. We will:

- keep you informed with the latest news and guidance available via our monthly newsletter and regular email alerts
- offer a range of training and education events run by the Londonwide LEAD (Learning Education and Development) team
- provide access to our GP Support team

Please also remember to visit our excellent website – [www.lmc.org.uk](http://www.lmc.org.uk) to keep up to date.

5 **Motions to the annual conference of LMCs**

The following motions have been submitted by Waltham Forest LMC for inclusion in the agenda for the 2009 LMC Conference:

- That Conference insists, in view of the government’s introduction of a multitude of contributors to primary care delivery, that the central role of GPs as cost effective providers of generalist care must not be undermined.
- That Conference, while pleased that GPs are being more involved with the education of doctors in training including students, F2 doctors and GP trainees, notes that payment for this activity is unacceptably
low, and insists that remuneration for GP trainers and educators should more accurately reflect the market value of training the future medical workforce.

- That this meeting condemns the approach of the government in producing a plethora of failing initiatives and targets, and demands that future intentions be discussed with representatives of the profession in advance to ensure more effective health care delivery.

- That Conference demands that the government appreciate the crucial role of education in the recruitment and retention of doctors, and hence make more determined attempts to ensure that continuing professional development has a central position in the agenda of PCOs.

- That Conference calls for revalidation to be equitable for all GPs, properly matched to appraisal, and fit for purpose.

- That Conference calls for revalidation to be properly resourced, which includes adequate support from PCOs, proper funding for Appraisers and Responsible Officers, and appropriate funding for remediation.

6 Employment checks – an update
We have previously reported that the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) vetting and barring scheme will begin on 12 October 2009. However, please note that the registration of individuals will not start until July 2010 and employers cannot begin to check potential employees until November 2010.

We will continue to keep you updated.

7 Londonwide LEAD (Learning Education and Development) – upcoming events
Londonwide LEAD continues to focus on providing development and training for GPs, practice managers and practice nurses across the capital.

We will be providing workshops for GPs on the complaints process and other areas such as contracts of employment and a marketing strategy for your practice. This is in addition to two clinical update sessions for GPs. More information will follow soon.

LEAD has also initiated pan-London practice manager forums in order to improve communications across the capital. The forums enable practice managers from diverse areas of London to get together and learn from each other’s experiences. Future practice manager forums are scheduled for 23 June and 14 October.

LEAD has increased the provision of practice nurse focused training with the help of Sue Cross, Practice Nurse Advisor to Londonwide LMCs.

Our next event for practice nurses will be a minor illness and injuries workshop on Tuesday 2 June 2009. Further information is available on the LMC website (http://www.lmc.org.uk/news/news-detail.aspx?dsid=4503).

We will also be running further free to attend practice nurse forums on 30 June and 17 November. The aim of these forums is to bring together nurses that may, in some cases, work in isolation, or who would like to discuss and learn more about clinical and non clinical issues that will affect their profession.

We are always looking for further input for you, our audience. Please do let us know if there are any workshops that you would like us to provide, by contacting: info@lmc.org.uk.

Please remember to check our website (http://www.lmc.org.uk/) regularly for information on all forthcoming LEAD events.

8 Freedom of information Act (FOIA)
The Freedom of Information Act applies to practices in terms of the services that are provided under the NHS contract. It also requires that you can confirm that you have certain employment policies. However, it does
not apply in terms of individual income or other particulars of employment.

The Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) has developed a template for practices to complete as your publication scheme. This sets out what information you have, and in what formats, that is available on request. The main requirement for a publication schedule is that you list what information is available. You do not have to provide the actual information itself on the schedule. You are not required to inform the Information Commissioner (IC) that you have adopted the scheme. This is assumed unless the ICO is informed otherwise. The ICO began to monitor the new scheme from March 2009. The guide to the information template is on the ICO website (http://www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/library/freedom_of_information/detailed_specialist_guides/doctors_guidance.pdf).

The GPC has also updated its Freedom of Information Act 2000 frequently asked questions (FAQs) guidance. This guidance is also available on our website (http://www.lmc.org.uk/downloadfile.aspx?path=/uploads/files/guidance/foifaq0409.pdf).

9 Best practice guidance for the assessment and management of vascular risk

The document sets out the plans for the introduction of a vascular risk assessment and management programme for patients aged between 40 and 74. The guidance explains in more depth what vascular disease is, why undertaking risk assessment and management is important and how these checks might be performed.

10 Online toolkit to help identify older people with depression
Take the challenge (http://www.takethechallenge.org.uk/), an online tool to help GPs identify depression in older patients, has been launched by the charity Age Concern.

The programme has been developed by Age Concern with the support of the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) to help improve the diagnoses and treatment of older people with depression. The test takes about ten minutes to complete online.

11 GPs to be revalidated online
The recently published RCGP ‘Guide to the Revalidation of General Practitioners’ (http://www.rcgp.org.uk/PDF/PDS_Guide_to_Revalidation_for_GPs_April_2009_V1.0.pdf) includes information on how GPs will be expected to complete an electronic portfolio for revalidation from April 2010.

The document sets out the evidence that GPs will have to provide in order to be revalidated from April 2010. The document states that although it will be possible to complete a paper portfolio, the preference will be for all GPs to complete an electronic portfolio for each appraisal. The document goes on to state that paper-based portfolios will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances if it can be justified by the GP.

The electronic portfolio for each appraisal will build into an ePortfolio covering the whole of the revalidation period.

12 Locum work and superannuation
Locum work done through locum agencies is not superannuable. Locum agencies in effect act as employment agencies. Therefore, locums working for agencies are employed by the agencies and not the NHS.

Independent locum work, or locum work organised via locum co-operatives and chambers, is still superannuable as the locums within these organisations remain self-employed.

If you are a GP carrying out locum work and you need any advice or support, please contact Nora Breen in our GP Support Team on 020 7387 2034 ext 241 or nbreen@lmc.org.uk.