

KNEBWORTH AND MARYMEAD MEDICAL PRACTICE

PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP NEWSLETTER

October 2018

Extended Surgery Hours

The new Extended Access service is now up and running in our locality, as from 1st October. It is available from 6.30 pm to 8.00 pm Mondays to Fridays and all day Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. Each Practice has been given an allocation of appointments and for Knebworth and Marymead it is eight doctor appointments, eight nurse appointments and eight healthcare assistant appointments per week. These appointments can be requested by telephone, but not online, through the Practice who will then arrange the booking on your behalf. The service will only cater for routine medical problems, it is still necessary to use the 111 Herts Urgent Care Service or the Lister A & E Department for emergencies.

Furthermore, it is highly likely that, were you to use this new service, the health professional that you see will not be known to you and, although they will be able to prescribe medications for you, they will not be able to refer you to a hospital consultant, this will have to be done later by our own Practice. Also, the service is only available to those patients who have agreed that their medical records can be shared beyond their own Practice.

However, the main downside of this new service is that, for Knebworth and Marymead patients, it is located at Sollershott Surgery, just off the A505, in Letchworth. We are continuing to discuss with the East and North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group the possibility of our patients being allowed to use Extended Access services at other, more convenient, locations.

The good news is that our own extended hours service will continue until 31st March 2019 and may go beyond that time point if continued NHS England funding can be secured. Just as a reminder, as well as the usual opening hours, Knebworth surgery is open on alternate Tuesdays from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm and on alternate Thursdays from 7.00 am to 8.30 am; Marymead surgery is open on alternate Tuesdays from 7.30 am to 8.30 am and from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm and on alternate Thursdays from 7.00 am to 8.30 am.

Health Shuttle

A recent press report suggests that the Health Shuttle, the subsidised door-to-door service for staff, patients and visitors going to Lister Hospital in Stevenage and also between Lister and the New QEII Hospital in Welwyn Garden City, is under threat.

The East and North Herts NHS Trust says that the service, which is used by relatively few people, runs at a loss of approximately £160,000 annually and that, given the financial pressures facing the NHS, they cannot allow this position to continue and the service's future is being reviewed, but a decision about its future has yet to be made.

On behalf of Knebworth and Marymead patients, the PPG is planning to make representation to the senior management of the Trust in order to try to prevent the demise of this important facility.

Flu Vaccinations

Although this year's programme has, for the most part, gone well there are currently problems affecting the supply of the adjuvanted vaccine for the over 65s. The Practice expects to receive further supplies in the middle of this month and then again at the end of November. The first batch will be given to the highest priority patients (eg the over 75s) so don't be surprised if you don't get yours until November if you are otherwise well. It takes two weeks to work so you should still be protected in time.

Knebworth Surgery Development

All leases and other legal documents have now been signed off by the various parties concerned and we should now be able to look forward to some progress being made. The first task will be to move library books and equipment into St Martin's church and we understand that the section of the church that will house the library has been cleared in preparation for this and that the necessary communications equipment has been installed. When this move is completed, the contractors should then be able to access the site and begin the work of demolition of the library building.

FORTHCOMING PPG MEETINGS

The next PPG Meeting is on Tuesday, 23rd October. This will be at Knebworth, starting at 7.00 pm as usual. All patients are welcome to come along, you don't have to be a signed-up member of the PPG. We can guarantee that the Meeting will end at 8.00 pm.

Our November Meeting will be on Tuesday, the 20th, again commencing at 7.00 pm, but this time the venue will be the Marymead Surgery.

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Produced by The Knebworth and Marymead Patient Participation Group