Newsletter May 2022

In the previous newsletter we were anticipating the resumption of face to face meetings so it is pleasing to report that the first meeting for two years took place on March 17th. This newsletter reflects the discussion at that meeting. The next planned meeting will be later in the year. See the website for updates.

Not all surgeries have the new updated telephone system now installed at Fern.

The break in face to face meetings has enabled us to rethink some aspects of our PPG and so we have developed some ideas around terms of reference so that we can see directions for the future particularly as we move into ever new health organisational arrangements. (Integrated Care Systems covering all of south and mid Essex)

One of the key areas we would like to improve is membership of and participation in the group. Many people cannot attend meetings but we think that more could become involved by accessing the newsletters on the Fern website and sending in ideas.

General practice looks very different after two years of telemedicine and we are all learning new ways of gaining health advice and treatment. While many users of the service at Fern are enthusiastic about receiving a call rather than taking time off work, others are not as keen. We all acknowledge that times are changing and that the pandemic has had a profound effect. Appointments are available and in some cases following a phone call from a doctor or nurse you will be asked to come into the surgery.

Please be aware that receptionists work to guidance issued by doctors to ask questions about your reason for contacting the surgery and this is done to help you get a speedy response. Unfortunately online appointments are not practical at the moment.

Some changes in the provision of hospital services are also coming into focus. Did you know that a ‘virtual’ hospital exists to treat people at home rather than in hospital?

A virtual bed is your own bed at home but the staff who visit you are 100% real! So far this is small in numbers.

People get better and rehabilitate more rapidly when at home but receiving all the health services they would normally have only in hospital.

If anyone has had this experience we would like to hear from you.

If you are waiting for hospital treatment you will soon be able to access a service called My Planned Care. Don’t worry if you don’t do technology, if you have been on a waiting list for a while you will get a call from the Referral Support Service part of the well being system, checking how you are doing. It is still possible to move to another hospital for treatment but you would then be on their waiting list not the local one.

Staff changes : a new GP to replace Dr Summers who has retired. We welcome Dr Mohammad and best wishes to Dr Summers; 2 Care Coordinators working with nursing homes in the area covered by Fern and partner practices in the PCN; (Primary Care Network); A new deputy practice manager to increase the administrative team in support of increased workloads related to the PCN.

The PPG asked for quicker updating of information on the website as it can be frustrating when patients cannot get the correct guidance.

They also asked about systems for checking information when it appears something has been missed and were assured that a robust method is in place.

Email f.patientgroup@nhs.net to add your questions