

Appendix 2

GPC Media Coverage Report – December 2009 & January 2010

In December and January the main topics in the media regarding GPs were:

December

Swine flu vaccination for the under fives: This was the main GP-related story of the month, attracting the majority of coverage in the regional and national media. Several papers criticised the breakdown of talks between the government and the BMA.

Out-of-hours: A number of the regional papers discussed GP out-of-hours services, with three featuring BMA comment about the lack of funding.

January

Out-of-hours: With the start of the inquest into the death of David Gray out-of-hours stories increased in volume throughout the month, as did negative comment articles questioning the value of the new GP contract. The GPC had letters published in the Daily Mail, the Independent and the Telegraph. Its doctors also wrote two articles on the topic, which appeared in the Times and the Telegraph in January and very early February.

Practice boundaries: The publication of the GPC's paper on practice boundaries generated positive coverage in the Telegraph and on page 2 of the Financial Times.

BMA mentions in the national and regional media for December:

	National	Regional	Total
Print:	13	48	61
Broadcasts:	12	12	24

SUBJECT	National broadcast	National print
Swine flu vaccine	6	7
Call for hospitals to log all mistakes	-	1
BMA manifesto – call for longer GP appointments	-	4
GP pay	-	1
Shortage of GPs in deprived areas	1	-
NHS IT funding cuts	5	-
TOTAL	12	13

SUBJECT	Regional media
Swine flu	38
Disciplinary	5
Out of Hours	3
Pharmacy	2
Obituary	2
IT	2
Phone number	1
Child obesity	1
Practice boundaries	1
Award	1
MP Visit	1

Privatisation	1
Faith	1
Antibiotic	1

Press releases issued:

23/12/09 Doctors concerned about role of private companies in the NHS, poll by BMA and Doctors.net.uk shows
30/12/09 New Year's resolutions to protect the NHS

BMA mentions in the national and regional media for January:

	National	Regional	Total
Print:	15	38	53
Broadcasts:	2	9	11

SUBJECT	National broadcast	National print
Access to GP appointments	1	-
Patient opinions posted online	1	-
Dangers of buying fake drugs online	-	1
GP practice boundaries to be scrapped	-	2
GP out-of-hours	-	9
Free prescription charges shelved by government	-	1
Electronic patient records	-	2
TOTAL	2	15

SUBJECT	Regional media
Cremation fees	19
NHS budget cuts	10
Suspended GP - Mooney	4
Swine flu vaccination	3
Dementia	2
Out of hours	1
Patient involvement	1
Prescription charges	1
Private fees	1
Reciprocal health agreement – Channel Islands	1
Snow	1
Yoga for cancer patients	1
Generic drugs	1
MMR	1

Press releases issued:

7/1/10 Joint Press Release NHS Employers and the BMA: Agreement reached on General Medical Services' contract negotiations
26/1/10 BMA sets out its proposal for how to reform general practice boundaries

Letters to Press from GPs include the following:

Subject	Welsh Press	Welsh Broadcast
Sunbeds	6	2
Alcohol	11	5
Appointment of new First Minister	2	
Swine Flu	2	1
Mental Health	1	
NHS Care	4	2
Organ Donation	5	1
Drugs	2	1
School Nurses	1	
GP Services	3	
Junior Doctors	1	
Recruitment and retention	4	
Rickets	1	
Budget		1
Smoking		1
Total	43	14

Date	Signatory	Publication	Subject of letter
15/1/10	Dr Laurence Buckman	Independent	Out-of-hours and Ubani case
18/1/10	Dr Laurence Buckman	Times	Out-of-hours
28/1/10	Dr Laurence Buckman	Daily Mail	Out-of-hours

BMA Cymru Wales Media Coverage for Dec 09 – Jan 10

GP media work

Issues Welsh GPs have commented on in the media include; Access to GP services, the dangers of binge drinking, the need for regulation on sunbeds.

Blog

The Public Affairs Team have used the blog as follows; Committee Chair's set out their expectations for 2010, the need for regulation of sunbeds, irresponsible drinks promotions encouraging binge drinking.

Press releases included:

BMA Cymru's support for Julie Morgan MP's Private Members Bill on sunbeds, and alcohol abuse

Scotland GPC Communications Report

November – January 2010

BMA Mentions in the Scottish Press

We do not currently have a monitoring service to pick up on broadcast mentions. The following includes BMA quotes or interviews relating to GP and public health issues.

Subject	Scottish Press	Scottish Broadcast
Swine Flu	12	3
Alcohol Policy	32	6
Buying prescription drugs online	1	
Antibiotic prescribing	2	
Ranking GP Surgeries	2	
Managing Chronic Illness/Disease	7	

Extended Hours	4	
Out of Hours	2	1
NHS Performance	7	
Obesity	4	
GP Appointments`	1	
Organ Donation	3	
Physician Assisted Suicide	7	2
GP Workforce	1	
Ban on Commercial Providers of GP services	1	
Life Expectancy	1	
Total	87	12

Press Releases issued:

26 November	Doctors' leaders urge politicians to 'put party politics aside' and support the Alcohol Bill (Brian Keighley)
4 December	BMA Scotland response to the publication of the NHS Annual Report 2008/09 (Brian Keighley)
10 December	Efficiency savings should not become service cuts, warns BMA Scotland (Brian Keighley)
11 December	BMA Scotland announces plans to celebrate the best of NHS general practice in 2010 (Dean Marshall)
16 December	BMA Scotland response to Chief Medical Officer's report (Brian Keighley)
30 December	New Year's resolutions to protect the NHS in Scotland (Brian Keighley)
8 January	BMA Scotland welcomes MPs support for minimum pricing of alcohol and urges MSPs to listen to experts not industry (Brian Keighley)
12 January	Cost of alcohol misuse 'unsustainable' warns BMA Scotland (Sally Winning)
19 January	BMA call for bold action to increase organ donor rates (Brian Keighley)
21 January	BMA comment on End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill (Brian Keighley)
27 January	BMA Scotland welcomes new laws to ban commercial companies from NHS general practice (Dean Marshall)

Articles/Letters:

Date	Author	Publication	Title
5/12/09	Brian Keighley	Scotsman	Beer for Beardies
10/01/10	Brian Keighley	Scotland on Sunday	Assisted suicide law could impair trust
22/01/10	Brian Keighley	Herald	Nuffield Report
31/01/10	Brian Keighley	Sunday Times	Don't speak ill of NHS

GPC Parliamentary and Assembly Activity Report

WESTMINSTER

The Parliamentary Unit in London keeps in contact with MPs across all the political parties.

MP-GP practice visit scheme

More than 300 MPs have contacted the BMA's Parliamentary Unit since the MP-GP practice visit scheme was introduced in October 2008. So far, the BMA has helped organised over 160 MP visits to GP practices in their constituency with many more in the process of being planned. Feedback has been positive with the majority of MPs reporting a better understanding of general practice following their practice visit.

If you would like to get involved with the MP-GP practice visit scheme, please contact Susan Solanki, Parliamentary Liaison Officer at ssolanki@bma.org.uk

BMA Manifesto

The BMA published a manifesto document in December 2009 as the centrepiece for the Association's General Election strategy. The manifesto captures priorities across the Association (it contains the workforce priorities of the individual branches of practice; commentary on the economic downturn and the impact on the health service; NHS reform; and also priorities for public health). The GP section on the manifesto can be viewed on page 20 of the document online at: http://www.bma.org.uk/lobbying_campaigning/manifesto.jsp

It is planned that template letters to PPCs will be available on the BMA website at the end of February to encourage members to write to/email their local PPCs about the BMA's manifesto.

Legislation

There are a number of pieces of legislation that the BMA is following:

Personal Care at Home Bill: People with the highest needs will be offered free personal care under this legislation. The Personal Care at Home Bill is expected to guarantee free personal care for the 280,000 people with the highest needs as well as providing home care for the first time to the 130,000 people who need it. The Parliamentary Unit has been monitoring the passage of this legislation, which is now currently in the Lords.

Children Schools and Families Bill: There are clauses in the Bill which establish a statutory obligation to provide information to Local Safeguarding Children's Boards for all of its functions; this includes the release of confidential information about children, parents, and siblings, for example. The BMA believes that it is crucial that children and young people's interests are protected but this must be appropriately balanced against maintaining patient confidentiality and the BMA has been seeking amendments to ensure this. The Bill is currently in the Commons Committee.

Equality Bill: The Bill aims to streamline the various strands of equality legislation into a single piece of legislation. The BMA believes that the Bill will help lead to greater consistency and clarity within the law and will help, through mechanisms such as public sector equality duties, to ensure that healthcare organisations fulfil their responsibility to eliminate discrimination and promote equality in all aspects of healthcare. The Bill is currently in the Lords.

Parliamentary Debates

On 9th February, Health Minister Mike O'Brien MP gave a statement on OOHs following the publication of the review of the current arrangements for the local commissioning and provision of OOHs services by Dr David Colin-Thomé and Professor Steve Field. The statement can be viewed at: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100209/debtext/100209-0004.htm#10020974000003

On 27th January, there was an Opposition Day Debate in the Commons on OOHs. The debate can be viewed at: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100127/debtext/100127-0014.htm#10012756000001

Parliamentary Select Committees

The BMA continues to monitor and input towards numerous select committee inquiries:

Health Select Committee inquiry on commissioning

Some of the issues that the Health Select Committee has been considering include 'World Class Commissioning', the purchaser-provider split, commissioning and 'system reform', specialist commissioning, and commissioning for the quality and safety of services. The BMA has submitted written evidence to this inquiry and Dr Hamish Meldrum appeared as a witness at the end of last year. The inquiry is due to publish its final report after February.

Health Select Committee inquiry on social care

The Health Select Committee is undertaking an inquiry into the future of social care services. Issues for consideration include future funding of long-term residential and domiciliary care for older people and people with physical or learning disabilities; personalisation of social care services; more effective, consistent and user-friendly social care services. The BMA has been monitoring progress of the Committee's inquiry and the inquiry is expected to publish its final report after February.

House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee inquiry on PFI

The Lords Economic Affairs Committee has launched a wide-ranging inquiry into PFI and off balance sheet debt across various sectors including hospitals. The BMA has submitted written evidence to this inquiry and Dr Mark Porter appeared as a witness in December 2009. The inquiry is due to publish its final report shortly.

BMA Parliamentary Unit
February 2010

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

November 2009 – January 2010

During this period, BMA Scotland continued to lobby for support of the Tobacco and Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Bill. Part 1 of this bill places restrictions on the display and promotion of tobacco and bans tobacco vending machines; while Part 2 bans commercial companies from holding NHS GMS contracts. The bill was passed following a stage 3 debate in January. The BMA circulated a briefing to MSPs in advance of this final debate urging support for both parts.

Also during this period, the public affairs office arranged a number of meetings with individual and groups of MSPs. We arranged meetings between Brian Keighley and members of the Labour and Conservative Health Teams (separately).

In an effort to improve relations between the BMA and Health Committee members we organised a lunch in the Scottish Parliament which was attended by Chairs of each of the BoP committees and all members of the Health Committee.

In December, Alan McDevitt appeared before Health Committee to give evidence on Clinical Portal Technology as part of the Committee's IT inquiry.

In January, Andrew Buist appeared before the Health Committee to give evidence on Rural Out of Hours care as part of a Committee inquiry.

Following a series of 1-1 meetings with MSPs raising concerns about confidentiality of health information, the BMA secured a commitment from Government officials to consult the BMA on the drafting of a new code of practice on joint inspections of services. The Government also made a commitment to ensure that regulations relating to this under the Public Services Reform Bill would be subject to parliamentary scrutiny.

We also circulated a briefing paper supporting the role of the Health Visitor as part of the wider primary care team, attached to GP practices in advance of a conservative debate on the issue.

In January, Labour MSP Richard Simpson tabled a motion in advance of the BMA's General Practice Week (8 – 12 February). This motion received more than 35 signatures in support and was selected for debate in February. The motion read as follows:

Celebrating Scotland's First Ever General Practice Week in Scotland—That the Parliament notes that more than 21 million patient consultations take place in general practice in Scotland every year; is proud of the high quality service provided by GPs and their practice teams every day, and welcomes the first ever General Practice Week in Scotland, from 8 to 14 February 2010, hosted

by the British Medical Association Scotland in partnership with the Royal College of General Practitioners Scotland, which aims to celebrate the very best of NHS general practice in Scotland.

The BMA has maintained its position at the forefront of the campaign to introduce minimum pricing for alcohol as part of a wider alcohol strategy. During this quarter, we circulated a briefing on Minimum Pricing for Alcohol in advance of debate in Parliament which was mentioned on numerous occasions.

Gail Grant
Senior Public Affairs Officer
February 2010

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

NI Assembly debates

There are two sitting, or Plenary, days a week being on Monday and Tuesday where issues are debated, questions raised, legislation presented and motions passed. This report covers the Assembly session between 14 September and 8 December 2009.

The following debates have taken place in the NI Assembly, of relevance to NIGPC

DATE	ASSEMBLY DEBATE/MOTION
15-Sept-09	Ministerial Statement on Swine Flu
15-Sept-09	Ministerial Statement on Swine Flu
24-Nov-09	Ministerial Statement on Swine Flu

Assembly Questions

A number of Assembly Questions have been tabled of relevance to the NIGPC, covering issues such as the Comprehensive Spending Review, efficiencies and swine flu.

Health committee

The health, social services and public safety committee's agenda in this session (September- December 2009) has been dominated by the comprehensive spending review and trust contingency plans following a series of media reports on plans. Due to lack of information, it was decided that the BMA(NI) would not respond to speculation. If you would like a copy of the report of each evidence session please contact gimagee@bma.org.uk

MLA GP Practice Visits

MLA visits to GP Practices are being coordinated by the BMA, which has written on behalf of Dr Brian Dunn to all MLAs inviting them to visit GP practices in their constituencies.

Political Party Conferences/Seminars

- Alliance Party Speed Networking 14/10/09
- UUP Party Conference 24/10/09
- DUP Party Conference 21/11/09

Sara Morrow
BMA Northern Ireland
February 2010