

Dear Chair and Primary Care Committee (PCC)

Update regarding supervision and support for Physician Associates in North Central London in light of a Serious Untoward Incident.

Barbara and I write as PPG members and users of the GP practice that suffered the loss of Emily Chesterton, wrongly diagnosed by a PA. These issues have been thoroughly discussed by the HealthWatch PPG Group.

You will appreciate the concerns that this tragic clinical failure has raised about patient safety. These concerns have been sharpened in the context of the NHS urging greater use of PAs in primary care, largely as a response to entrenched difficulties in recruiting full time GPs.

Despite government legislation to mandate the GMC to register and regulate the conduct, training and supervision of PAs, it is likely that the current regulatory vacuum will remain in place until at least the end of the year.

You will be aware of the questions that we submitted to the PCC last year (and we are delighted that Rachel Lissauer is submitting them to this meeting to ensure full responses) as well as an online meeting scheduled for later this week, to be chaired by Catherine West MP, between the ICB and service users.

At that meeting we will be restating that there are many questions that the relationship between patients and PAs raises, especially in the light of the uncertainty about the proposed GMC role and the resources available to primary care to comply with yet another layer of oversight.

Until there is clarity and certainty, we feel that the ICB (as the clinical services commissioner for 1.6 million Londoners) has an overarching duty of care to use its powers of oversight and influence to work proactively to ensure that all steps are taken to ensure that our primary care services remain safe.

We hope that this will guide your approach and questioning in this important agenda item.

Barbara Rowlands

David Winskill

19th February 2024