

Patients at the Heart of the NHS?

A report on the 31st Annual Conference of the
National Association for Patient Participation

6th June 2009



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Acknowledgements

The National Association for Patient Participation would like to thank everyone who attended our 31st Conference. Particular thanks go to Audrey Hoggard, our Honorary Secretary, whose care and attention to detail in organising the event were appreciated by so many delegates.

Special thanks are also due to:

- ❖ Sir Denis Pereira Gray, N.A.P.P. Patron and Conference Chairman
- ❖ Dr Mike Warburton, Director for Access and Responsiveness at the Department of Health
- ❖ Professor Mike Kelly, Director, Public Health Excellence Centre, National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence
- ❖ Michaela Firth, Engagement Programme Manager, NHS Milton Keynes
- ❖ Esther Peapell, Head of Patient and Public Involvement, NHS Coventry

- ❖ Danny Daniels, N.A.P.P. Chairman and Workshop Facilitator
- ❖ Edith Todd, N.A.P.P. Trustee and Workshop Facilitator
- ❖ Sandy Gower, N.A.P.P. Trustee and Workshop Facilitator
- ❖ Sue Line, N.A.P.P. Trustee and Workshop Facilitator

- ❖ Emis for their continuing sponsorship of N.A.P.P.

Introduction

The 31st Annual Conference of the National Association for Patient Participation took place on 6th June 2009 in Coventry. The keynote address was delivered by Dr Mike Warburton, National Director for Access and Responsiveness, followed by a substantial question and answer session. The four workshops looked at public health, communication, commissioning and addressing local needs.

The key message from the Conference was that Patient Participation Groups have an increasingly important role to play - supporting their practices, influencing them and the wider NHS to provide the services that patients need, and promoting good health.

Keynote address: Dr Mike Warburton

The keynote address was given by Dr Mike Warburton who leads the Department of Health's work to promote better access to general practice and dentistry, as well as greater responsiveness of primary care services. Dr Warburton described the three strands of the national programme that he leads: improving the commissioning of services, supporting those who provide primary care and improving the engagement of those who use services.



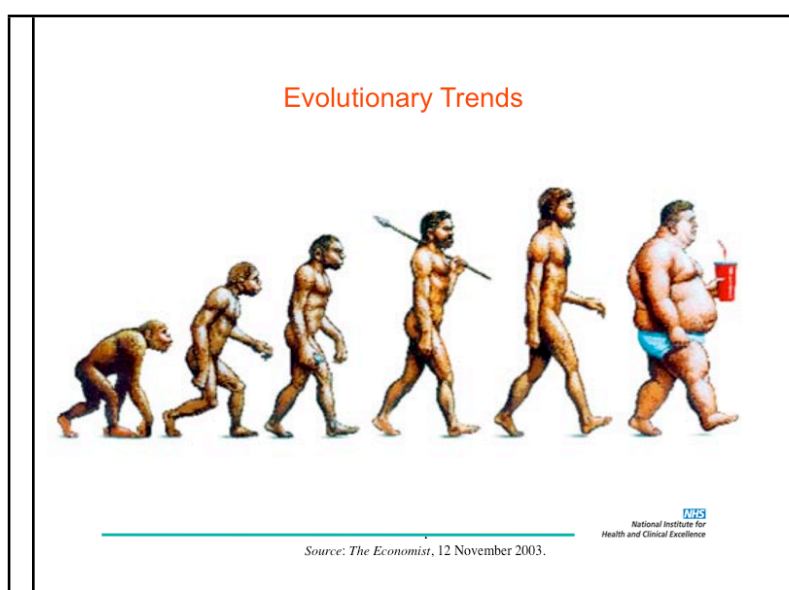
This is the programme that promoted the extension of opening hours within GP surgeries and which has funded the introduction of 112 new practices for underserved areas as well as 152 new GP-led health centres. Their work also includes the development of provider guides to help practices to become more responsive. Dr Warburton explained how these guides should improve the experiences of large numbers of patients, including those with visual or hearing impairments, people with a learning disability and those from black and minority ethnic communities.

Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) have an important role to play in providing the patient perspective to the practice and in supporting the implementation of that change. This is why the national programme is supporting the joint campaign between the NHS Alliance, the RCGP, the BMA and NAPP to promote PPGs (see www.growingppgs.com). Over the coming year, this will see a number of resources developed to promote more and better PPGs.

Workshop A: Improving health

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has a hugely important, and sometimes controversial, role to play in making recommendations about which services should be provided by the NHS. Many of these interventions relate to public health and can be very cost-effective. Guidance, in areas such as smoking cessation, community development, mental well-being among older people and promoting physical activity in the workplace can be found at <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PHG>

Professor Mike Kelly is the Director of the Public Health Excellence Centre at NICE. He led a highly interactive session looking at some of the major public health challenges and the ways in which PPGs may be able to help tackle them. Many public health interventions are extremely good value for money.



Action points for PPGs

- Visit the NICE website and review the evidence (www.nice.org.uk)
- Disseminate information to the widest possible audience
- Work with practices and others who can support this work

Action points for NAPP

- Share PPG health promotion success stories more widely
- Raise awareness of public health interventions and campaigns
- Offer guidance to PPGs who want to develop in this area of activity

Action points for the wider NHS

- Prioritise prevention and community development
- Support PPGs in undertaking health promotion work
- Link PPGs up with local health trainers, expert patient programmes etc

Workshop B: Improving Communication

Many Patient Participation Groups communicate effectively with large numbers of patients through newsletters, websites, open events, face to face contacts etc. Michaela Firth explained how a social marketing model can help to target messages more effectively by considering 'behaviours' of the populations and not just segment by standard methods. She encouraged PPGs to think about the different populations that are served by their practices and how to adapt communications to suit each of them.

Social marketing is a technique first used in the 1970's which marries the classic marketing tools with all the behavioural science that health and social care does so well. It is a 'people science'. By considering what drives people to behave in a certain way we can adapt what we offer to support them. Communications methods need to be driven by what we want to achieve. A leaflet or newsletter may be sufficient if we wish to share information but if we want someone to behave differently e.g. join our PPG, we need to engage in effective two way, ideally face to face, conversation. The presentation also shared examples of how social marketing is being used in the NHS to improve patients' experience and the commissioning of services. It shared the stakeholder mapping and the AIDA (awareness, interest, desire and action) tools. For more information contact michaela.firth@miltonkeynes.nhs.uk

The South Central Strategic Health Authority Engagement Toolkit can be found at:

<http://www.institute.nhs.uk/images//documents/wcc/PCT%20portal/PPETOOLKITwithlinksFINAL.pdf>

Action points for PPGs

- Face to face communication is likely to be the most effective
- Need to understand as much as possible about what would make a difference to different groups of patients
- Ask PCT to provide data on local health needs

Action points for NAPP

- Share newsletters/websites etc through NAPP website
- Provide resources that help PPGs to communicate more effectively

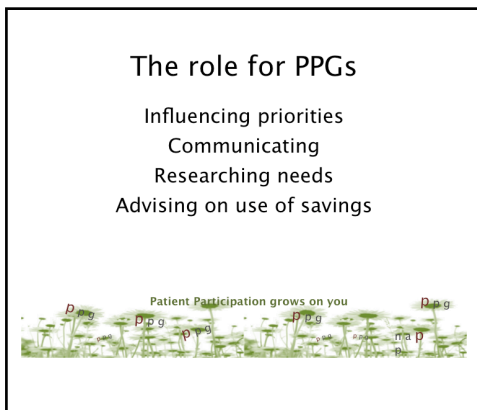
Action points for the wider NHS

- Recognise the value of PPG communications and support them financially
- Work with PPGs to convey key local messages
- See PPGs as a key vehicle to engage with patients.

Workshop C: Influencing Commissioning

In recent years, NAPP has been stressing the importance of commissioners understanding better what it is like to use their services, or to be a carer of someone who uses those services. We have advocated the use of patient stories (<http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/~jacky/index.htm>), the capturing of patients' experiences (<http://www.pickereurope.org/frequentfeedback>), the use of community development techniques and the role that Patient Participation Groups can play as the building blocks of patient and public involvement in commissioning.

The workshop was facilitated by Graham Box who described the eleven competencies of world class commissioning as well as the essentials of practice based commissioning (PBC). These two approaches are designed (a) to raise substantially the quality of commissioning by Primary Care Trusts and (b) to increase the levels of clinical engagement in planning and delivering services.



The discussion was illuminated by a case study from HuntsComm, a practice based commissioning group in Huntingdonshire. Nick Roberts explained how they are building a Patient Congress with two patients from each PPG in the commissioning group's 22 practices. The Board, which includes an influential lay member, has been extremely successful in redesigning services and

avoiding unnecessary referrals, thereby making substantial savings that can be reinvested to improve patient care (see www.huntscomm.nhs.uk)

Action points for PPGs

- Network with other PPGs to influence wider commissioning decisions
- Don't underestimate the skills and insights that PPGs can offer
- Consider joining your Local Involvement Network (LINK)

Action points for NAPP

- Use website to showcase successful models
- Work with PCTs to offer training for interested lay people
- Continue to push for greater lay PPG involvement in PBC

Action points for the wider NHS

- Learn from the HuntsComm model
- Approve business cases without undue delay
- Promote people based- and not pocket book- commissioning
- Engage PPGs in commissioning decisions
- Involve patients in risk management and provided education opportunities

Workshop D: Meeting Local Needs

In recent years, NHS Coventry has made great progress in promoting and developing PPGs, which they call Patient Panels. Indeed, they have a target to reach 95% of practices with a Panel in place. Esther Peapell has led much of this work and kindly agreed to share her insights and experiences by facilitating a workshop on meeting local needs.

Esther Peapell described a number of challenges if the NHS is to meet local needs as effectively as possible. The most fundamental of these is to understand the needs of all sections of any community, often described as the problem of reaching those who are “seldom heard”. This challenge is closely followed by the difficulties of prioritising among those different needs.

Esther shared a recent example where pressure from the Patient Panels and the wider community led the PCT to admit that there was a better way of providing phlebotomy services across the city and redesigning them in response to what they were told.

The workshop identified a number of areas where PPGs can help in identifying and meeting local needs:

- ✓ Working with practices to interpret the national patient survey results
- ✓ Getting involved at every stage of the decision-making cycle
- ✓ Helping to educate the workforce
- ✓ Capturing the views of different community groups
- ✓ Networking with each other to speak across a wider area
- ✓ Running self care and health promotion events

Action points for PPGs

- Be persistent and don't take “no” for an answer
- Be proactive in putting forward ideas to improve local services
- Pull together

Action points for NAPP

- Continue to promote the role of PPGs in helping to understand local needs
- Share success stories
- Encourage clinicians to promote and support self care

Action points for the wider NHS

- Support PPGs financially
- Incentivise and support practices to set up PPGs
- Involve PPGs from the start
- Listen and respond

Conclusions

The Conference closed with a Question and Answer session, including discussions on the future of PPGs, the role of PPGs in tackling health inequalities and the ways that NAPP can communicate more effectively with its members.

The Conference chairman, Sir Denis Pereira Gray, then summarised the key messages, relating to the role of PPGs in improving the health of local communities, improving communication and motivating a more responsive service. He also warned that the financial pressures in years to come will be far-reaching: PPGs have a vital role to play in ensuring that the patient perspective is always the dominant consideration if cuts become necessary.

Sir Denis concluded by thanking the organisers, the excellent speakers, and all those who had travelled far to attend.

Delegates evaluated the Conference with an average score of 4.2 on a 5-point scale where 5 is excellent. The main learning point for next year is to review the balance between workshops and plenary sessions.

The 32nd Annual Conference will take place in the Sheffield area, probably in the first week of June 2010.

For more information about the National Association for Patient Participation, please visit www.napp.org.uk or email admin@napp.org.uk