Next steps for members to ensure the success of local practice forums

In the 11th article on the new professional body the chairmen of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society’s national pharmacy boards, discuss the importance of the new local practice forums and highlight the recent launch of an LPF toolkit to support members in setting up LPFs.

Although the new professional body for pharmacy will still be called the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, it will be different from the “old” Society. The national pharmacy boards will represent interests in England, Scotland and Wales, with local practice forums (LPFs) providing local structure. The LPFs will bring together the many professional channels and networks that already exist, as well as providing innovative ways of virtual networking via web-based services.

LPFs will form a vital component of the new professional body. Their function and core activities have been described in recent articles (PJ, 16 May 2009, p585 and PJ, 25 July 2009, p95) and further valuable insights into what an LPF will do have been gained from early LPF adopters across Britain.

LPFs will provide:

- A dynamic and supportive local environment responsive to the needs of members
- A framework and structure for the delivery of future member services
- An identity and network at local and national levels
- A platform upon which to build local public awareness of pharmacy-driven services
- A mechanism and planning process to support collaborative working with other healthcare professionals and to deliver improved health outcomes for patients

As chairmen of the national pharmacy boards, we have been extremely impressed by the early interest and activity associated with establishing LPF leadership roles and subsequent actions in setting up LPFs.

To support the further development and establishment of LPFs, a toolkit is now available to set up an LPF.

The toolkit has been produced with valuable input from early LPF pilots, PLB pioneers and the professional networking reference group. The first version will be available as a hard copy (as well as online) and will be allocated by LPF facilitators or board members once the early LPF leadership roles have been identified.

The national pharmacy boards and regional committees are organising a series of stakeholder events across Britain from September to November. At these meetings the proposed LPF locations will be shared with members (the Welsh board has already announced seven LPF locations) and the next steps to individual LPFs can be agreed. These events are also a great opportunity for members to network, meet board members, ask any questions and address any concerns they may have about LPFs.

All members of the national pharmacy boards are fully committed to attending these events and all LPFs will have a dedicated board member to support and work with individual or groups of LPFs on an ongoing basis.

LPFs will also receive direct support from dedicated staff in London, Edinburgh and Cardiff. In addition, full-time LPF facilitators will work across Britain, initially offering early direction and support to LPFs, providing and sharing best practice at both local and national levels.

Our new professional body will be fully active early next year and we need to mobilise and set up the new LPFs as soon as we can, but at a pace determined by the local members.

We urge all members to read through the LPF toolkit and to look out for their invitation to the forthcoming LPF engagement events. Following the local events, or where the early LPF leadership roles have already been locally agreed, the toolkit can provide a step-by-step guide to the next stages of LPF development.

We look forward to hearing from members as they establish their local LPFs and to celebrating our successes as, together, we move towards an exciting and rewarding future for pharmacy.

Get involved

If you would like to get involved in the development of the professional body, go to www.pharmacyplb.org and click on “Get involved”.

Unique opportunity

This is a unique opportunity to build a professional body that supports us in our daily practice and furthers the aims of the profession. How this transpires locally should be in response to what members want and we would urge as many people as possible to become involved in setting up LPFs. — Sandra Melville, chairman, Scottish Pharmacy Board

The toolkit has been produced with valuable input from early LPF pilot teams, PLB pioneers and the professional networking reference group. The first version will be available as a hard copy (as well as online) and will be allocated by LPF facilitators or board members once the early LPF leadership roles have been identified.

The national pharmacy boards and regional committees are organising a series of stakeholder events across Britain from September to November. At these meetings the proposed LPF locations will be shared with members (the Welsh board has already announced seven LPF locations) and the next steps to individual LPFs can be agreed. These events are also a great opportunity for members to network, meet board members, ask any questions and address any concerns they may have about LPFs.

All members of the national pharmacy boards are fully committed to attending these events and all LPFs will have a dedicated board member to support and work with individual or groups of LPFs on an ongoing basis.

LPFs will also receive direct support from dedicated staff in London, Edinburgh and Cardiff. In addition, full-time LPF facilitators will work across Britain, initially offering early direction and support to LPFs, and providing and sharing best practice at both local and national levels.

Our new professional body will be fully active early next year and we need to mobilise and set up the new LPFs as soon as we can, but at a pace determined by the local members.

We urge all members to read through the LPF toolkit and to look out for their invitation to the forthcoming LPF engagement events. Following the local events, or where the early LPF leadership roles have already been locally agreed, the toolkit can provide a step-by-step guide to the next stages of LPF development.

We look forward to hearing from members as they establish their local LPFs and to celebrating our successes as, together, we move towards an exciting and rewarding future for pharmacy.

www.pjonline.com