

Medical Director's Notes

It is with great sadness that I heard the news of the sudden passing of our colleague Debs Banerjee. Debs was a prominent local GP working in Ipswich and Long Melford, an appraiser and NHSE medical adviser.



Debs was a board director of the Federation for nearly ten years until 2022. He was also a much valued medical director in our Urgent Care team and was crucial to mobilising the Out of Hours service. He was kind, generous with his extensive wisdom and knowledge and would always step-up when needed. I learned so much from him.

Debs will be missed and our thoughts are with his family during this time.

GP Collaborative - formation of the GP Executive

The GP Collaborative, containing Suffolk & Essex LMCs and our two local federations, have concluded an innovative project. It aimed to understand how we might start to reverse the long-term decline in the influence of general practice. The project included interviewing leaders from hospitals and commissioners to identify current issues and future opportunities.

There was some positive feedback but much of it was challenging. The Collaborative has taken time to consider how best to respond. We have decided to form an Executive, a small group of GPs and managers. These will be drawn from members of the Collaborative and will have the significant time needed to address issues highlighted by the interviews. Each Collaborative organisation continues as now, particularly the primacy of our LMCs.

The Executive's priorities are Suffolk and North-east Essex general practice 'speaking as one'; having deeper relationships with system leaders and having the time to proactively shape/develop plans - rather than just responding to others. The GP Executive will form in January and we will keep members updated.

Ipswich Urgent Treatment Centre - Fed involvement ending

The Fed has been working with ESNEFT and the ICB, for many years, to develop this service which sits at the front door of the Emergency Department. We introduced a general practice way of working with SystemOne, local staff and replicating daytime general practice e.g. making referrals (not sending patients to their GP). The ICB has now decided the service will be run by ESNEFT and the Fed's involvement will end during

ADHD Prescribing & Monitoring service

Suffolk practices are handing back the shared care element of this work. As NSFT is unable to provide the service, the Fed has been asked to provide support. This would be for adults and children from 1 April.

We are working closely with Suffolk LMC and NSFT to ensure the transfer and new service is safe and sustainable. This includes co-ordinating our communications to patients which will happen once we have finalised our plans.

GP Fed 2023/4 accounts

Turnover increased 5% to £25.9m and the surplus before tax was £101,835 (up from £73,696 the previous year). Net current assets, which is a measure of overall financial health, was £1.4m.

Member services update

- The GP Support Hub won the National Healthcare Professional Education Provider of the Year award at the General Practice Awards. Being shortlisted was an honour and winning via a public vote, a recognition of the incredible support we receive from our members.
- **Online Pension event** - for all primary care staff. Tuesday 25th Feb, 7-8pm - click [here](#) to book



Digital update

- **Ardens path results auto-filing project** - SystmOne has released an Auto-Review blood results feature. Certain results are auto-reviewed/filed if they satisfy locally coded rules. If not, they remain in the pathology inbox to be reviewed manually.

The new system should save GP time but the initial practice set-up is time consuming and represents a clinical risk if done incorrectly. Ardens have developed their own version but this still requires local adaptation. It makes sense for the set-up and maintenance to happen once (i.e. at scale) on behalf of all practices. We are setting up a project team to do this.

- **EPIC group** - ESNEFT is implementing a new electronic patient record system, EPIC, from October 2025. It does not integrate with SystmOne/Emis and will replace multiple systems, some of which general practice use e.g. pathology. To ensure a coordinated response, the GP Collaborative are setting-up an EPIC general practice group to co-ordinate working with ESNEFT.
- **AI scribes**
 - These listen and transcribe patient-clinician conversations in real time. They then extract symptoms, diagnoses, medications, procedures, orders etc and generate clinical notes, referral letters etc.
 - It is early days for the technology but informal testing of Heidi AI suggests it works 'spookily' well. They allow the clinician to focus on their patient rather than recording notes, so the quality of the consultation improves and this may reduce the intensity of work. GPs may be more productive.
 - The products available include Heidi Health which we think is probably most suited to individual practice use. Others include Tortus, Kiwipen and Anima. All of them typically focus on secondary care as this is the largest market.
 - Whilst they are generally free at the moment, cost will be a future issue.
 - At this stage we continue to recommend practices do not use AI scribes. The Fed's Data Protection Officer Kafico, on behalf of all our member practices, has made a submission to the Information Commissioner regarding unresolved issues. We are hoping for positive news in early 2025 after which we will offer a training programme to members.