

This week in the Patients Association Weekly News:

- **The Patients Association awarded a medal of excellence**
- **Coronavirus update**
- **Raising awareness of community pharmacies**
- **A review of the non-emergency patient transport services**
- **Opportunities with NICE**
- **A patient's story from the helpline**

The Patients Association awarded a medal of excellence



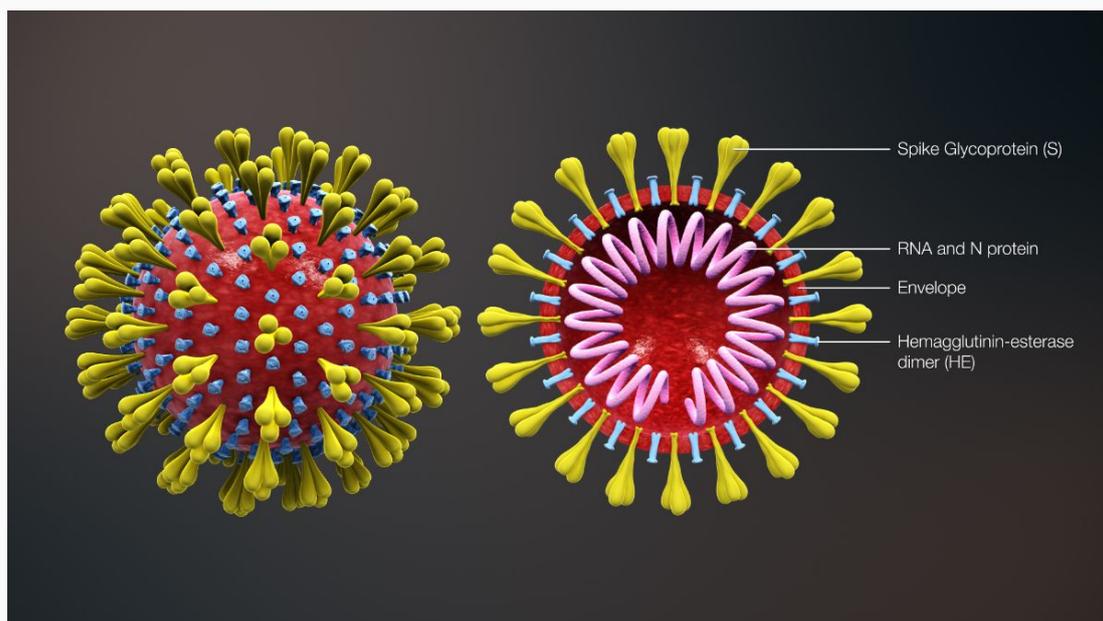
We are delighted to report that we were presented with the Senior Vice-President's Medal for Excellence at the Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony of the European Society for Person-Centred Healthcare (ESPCH)*.

The medal was awarded to our CEO Rachel Power in recognition of, "the superlative work of the Patients Association in promoting person-centred approaches to health and social care."

Unfortunately, Rachel was unwell on the day of the ceremony, so Shivani Shah (pictured), our Head of Programmes, collected the award on her behalf.

* The ESPCH is a professional body of multi-disciplinary clinicians and patients with a mission to address the challenges that clinicians and healthcare systems face in terms of the increasing impersonal nature of healthcare and the growing number of patients with serious long-term illnesses.

Coronavirus update



The outbreak of coronavirus continues to spread around the world. Here in the UK, as of 9am on Thursday 5th March, 18,083 people had been tested of which 115 were confirmed as positive.

Based on the World Health Organisation's declaration that this is a public health emergency of international concern, the UK's Chief Medical Officers have raised the risk to the UK from low to moderate.

The Department of Health and Social Care issues daily updates which includes information about the virus, the number of confirmed patients, the level of risk and

advice for returning travellers. Please check the webpage regularly and follow their advice.

[Read more](#)

Raising awareness of community pharmacies



Community pharmacies can offer patients so much more than medicine supplies and advice, and yet there is little awareness of the breadth of services they can provide. We have been asked to lead on a programme to help improve awareness of pharmacy services and how they are developing.

The first stage of the project is to assess where we are now with patient knowledge and engagement, where there are examples of current good practice and what community pharmacies could do to change public perceptions.

Is this something you could help us with? We're hosting a roundtable discussion in Manchester later this month and we need patients and members of the public to take

part.

Topics to be covered could include:

- Do patients understand the developments taking place in community pharmacy services?
- Do patients consider a visit to the pharmacy over a visit to their GP or hospital?
- Can patients be effective advocates for investment in existing and new pharmacy services?
- If pharmacists get feedback from their patients and the local community, they will be better able to adapt and develop services to meet local needs. How can this work?

The event will be held in the morning on Monday 30th March at a venue in Manchester and we will pay expenses up to £30 per person. If you are interested in taking part and would like more information, please contact us at mailbox@patients-association.org.uk. Thank you.

A review of the NHS's non-emergency patient transport services

NHS England and NHS improvement are carrying out a comprehensive review of non-emergency patient transport services (NEPTS) to find out how the current system is working and how it can be improved in England.

The review would like to hear from as many people as possible and are asking if you could take the time to fill out their online questionnaire.

If you would like to know more about the review and how you can contribute, please visit their website [here](#).

[Complete the questionnaire](#)

Opportunities with NICE

NICE National Institute for
Health and Care Excellence

The National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (NICE) is the public body that evaluates best practice and cost-effectiveness of medicines and treatments. They

regularly seek input from patients and carers as part of their assessments and there are usually plenty of opportunities to get involved and give them your valuable opinions and feedback.

NICE are currently consulting on new and revised guidance for specific conditions and treatments so if you have experience of any of the following, please consider taking part.

- Acute coronary syndromes
- Swallowable gastric balloon capsule for weight loss
- Joint replacement: hip, knee and shoulder
- Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder
- Transcranial magnetic stimulation for auditory hallucinations
- Axonics sacral neuromodulation system for bladder control in people with symptoms of overactive bladder.

To find out more about these consultations, please visit the website [here](#).

Alternatively, you can explore other ways to get involved in the work NICE do. Please follow the link below.

[Get involved with NICE](#)

A patient's story from the helpline



We received a call from Dan* who rang on behalf of his wife Jean* about the private treatment she had received for a painful back condition.

Jean had initially seen an NHS consultant who recommended surgery, but this was not what she wanted so instead, she consulted a private practitioner. He looked at her scans and assured her that he could treat the condition with physiotherapy, and with an 85 – 100 per cent chance of success. Jean decided to take this route and paid £1,700 for the suggested course.

When the course of treatment had been completed, Jean had not only seen no improvement, she believed her condition was worse than before and certainly more painful.

Jean then saw another NHS consultant who also recommended surgery and this time Jean went ahead with the operation. She is now recovering well.

Before calling us, Dan had contacted the private practitioner to ask for Jean's £1,700 to be returned but was told she would not receive a refund of any amount. Dan then contacted us wanting to know if there was anything they could do.

In the first place, we advised Dan to contact the Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service (ISCAS) which is an independent adjudicator for complaints in the private healthcare sector. If the private healthcare provider concerned was one of their subscribers, they would be able to help him in the complaints process.

We advised Dan that it is unlikely that he would receive a full or partial refund but that he could seek legal advice from Action against Medical Accidents (AVMA), and we directed him to their website.

Finally, we suggested that if Dan or any of his family and friends were considering private healthcare in the future, it would be prudent to check whether the private provider is an ISCAS subscriber as that would provide the peace of mind of their support, should a complaints process be necessary.

*Names changed for privacy

If you would like to contact AVMA, you can access their website [here](#). If you are considering private healthcare and would like to contact ISCAS, you can access their website [here](#).

[Contact our free helpline](#)

[What our team is reading this week](#)

Using logic models to evaluate innovations in health care

Patient choice – how to choose the right hospital and consultant

New electronic flu vaccination service helps GPs

UK risks 'failing a generation' over child health, says report

£1 million for innovative student mental health projects

About Us

Our vision is that health and social care will be delivered in a way that meets every person's health and social care needs.

Our mission is to give effect to the patient voice, to improve patient experience and support people to engage fully in their own care. Find out more about our values on our [website](#).

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