**Article for July Focus Magazine**

**Patients aren’t helping patients in Burnham!**

Burnham Surgery met with our Patient Participation Group (PPG) at the end of June. We were pleased to hear of some new initiatives but overall feel very concerned that no-one at the highest levels of the NHS seem to be listening to the surgery’s ever-increasing problems of too many patients, not enough staff and a very small premises which is completely inadequate to meet current demand.

The good news is that in a recent survey 500 patients responded 90% gave the practice a good or very good rating. A few patients, 9 in number who rated the surgery performance as poor or very poor had experienced cancelled appointments, or no appointment availability, or no answer from reception.

The patient numbers continue to grow to over 9,500 with no extra capacity in the building. Although there are new Registrar doctors starting in August there will be a lot of hot-desking to accommodate them. Two medical students from Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) Medical School in Chelmsford will be joining for training and experience. Let’s hope the new registrars love Burnham so much they want to stay and that the new medical students love general practice so much that they want to become GPs. It very good news that Burnham Surgery is a training practice

The worrying headline statistic is that between January and May, 604 appointments were ‘lost’ as a result of patients not turning up. 77 of wasted appointments were with the GP. 211 wasted appointment were with the practice nurse. Altogether, all ‘no-shows’ considered, it meant over 106 hours of clinical staff time was wasted! **The clear message is that we can all help fellow patients by showing up to our appointments, or ringing up in advance to cancel so that the appointment can be reallocated to someone else.**

To help guide patients to the right care, receptionists are now trained as ‘care navigators’ and they are keen to build their reputations as trusted guides to the right clinician for your enquiry. Hopefully patients will soon feel confident to accept their advice about who to see to help, as it’s not always necessary to see a doctor.

Medicine reviews by phone are continuing but sometimes pharmacists don’t ring the patient at the booked time. The practice manager has promised to look into to this.on the subject of pharmacy, a letter will be sent to the local pharmacy committee (LPC) to point out that Savages / Co-op pharmacy appears to be overworked. Long queues often form with very long waits to get advice or collect prescriptions. Shouldn’t there be another pharmacy in Burnham?

Sadly Karen Slater, Practice Manager will be leaving the practice at the end of July to return to her Pharmacy profession. She will be much missed and we wish her well and thanked her for her hard work here in Burnham.

On behalf of Burnham PPG