

## **GP Services over the Christmas and New Year period – Guidance for practices in England**

### **December 2013**

GPC has been made aware that practices in some areas of the country have been receiving communications from Area Teams withdrawing previously agreed acceptance of early closure on 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013.

The position of GPC has not changed and the guidance available on our website still applies. This is available at: <http://bma.org.uk/practical-support-at-work/gp-practices/gp-services-during-holiday-period>

It is our view that Area Teams should not change their position because of further guidance they have received from NHS England when there has been no evidential change to suggest there will be an increased demand for services during these times to warrant it. Our view is that Area Teams themselves may be in breach of contract in doing so.

As we have previously stated, experience has shown that demand for services at these times, particularly Christmas Eve, has been very low and regulations allow GMS practices to subcontract services to an appropriate provider. The approach of Area Teams appears to be a departure from the previous practice of PCTs.

Practices should therefore stand by their original arrangements and if as a result they are threatened with breach of contract notices, GPC will support them, provided they have followed our published guidance and have behaved appropriately in doing so.