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Dear Patient

We wanted to inform you about the current challenges that we are facing. Unfortunately, due to a combination of retirement, resignation and ill health within our team of doctors we are going to be significantly under doctored for the patient population that we serve (9000). Like many practices across Scotland, we have been unable to recruit new GPs and struggle to find locums due a national shortage of GPs.

Please be assured that we are doing all we can to provide a safe service and urgent care to those that need it. We are currently in discussion with the health board regarding this.

As a result, we unfortunately have to make some changes to our service in the meantime.

- 1. We have applied to close the practice list temporarily to all new registrations (apart from new births)*
- 2. We have withdrawn our methadone clinic and coil service*
- 3. We have moved to a mainly on the day appointment system in line with many other GP practices.*

We aim to deliver care to those who most need it on the day. We realise it may take longer than you would like to be able to access GP appointments for routine health problems, and may have to call back if we have reached capacity for that day. We understand that this may cause frustration for some of you and ask that you bear with us in these difficult times and show patience to our reception staff.

We do operate a Zero Tolerance policy and will request removal from the health board of patients who are abusive to our staff.

Not all problems need to be dealt with by a GP, and our reception staff are trained to signpost you to the correct service to get your problem dealt with in an appropriate and timely manner.

As part of our wider practice team, we also have

- a very experienced Advanced Nurse Practitioner who is able to advise, examine and prescribe for a wide range of minor illnesses*
- a trainee Advance Nurse Practitioner*
- a Well Being Nurse from the mental health team who can give advice, refer on to services where appropriate and recommend treatment when needed*
- a Link Worker (who can help with benefits, housing, loneliness and many social other issues)*
- a Pharmacy Team supporting us who are able to deal with medication queries and problems.*

Please do not forget

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- *the minor ailments service at local pharmacies which provides free treatment for a wide range of minor illnesses*
- *(acne, athlete's foot, backache, cold sores, constipation, cough pain, diarrhoea, earache, eczema and allergies, haemorrhoids (piles), hay fever, headache, head lice, indigestion, mouth ulcers, nasal congestion, period pain, thrush, sore throat, threadworms, warts and verrucae)*
- *opticians should be the first contact for any eye issues*
- *dentists should be the first contact for any mouth or dental issues*

Using these services helps us to focus our time and appointments on patients who really need to see a GP.

The health board has replaced our phone system and we hope that this has improved your experience of contacting the practice. We do still have a high demand of lengthy calls however which our reception staff work hard to process.

We apologise also to those of you who have expressed disappointment that our email service was withdrawn. We realise that this provided an accessible and convenient service for many of you. Unfortunately, we were unable to meet the overwhelming demand, which raised patient safety concerns for us.

Whilst we welcome feedback from patients to improve patient care and safety and your experience of our service, we would respectfully request that you do not direct complaints to us regarding access to GP services. We are working as hard as we can to deliver this in an underfunded health service, and dealing with these complaints takes us away from delivering clinical care. We ask instead that if you have complaints regarding this that you direct these to the health board to petition for more support and funding in primary care for our patients that we serve..

Best wishes and with thanks,

Drs McGeoch, Queen, Stenhouse, Borland & Hepburn
The Red Wing