

RCGP Leadership Programme

May 2010

Dear Colleague

Developing GP leaders who can protect good care in straitened times

I am writing to you as an LMC chair because I know you will be concerned that at a time of financial pressure the voice of GPs is heard, understood, and VALUED. Indeed GPs need to be pivotal in the design and delivery of the new forms of care that will be necessary in the face of financial crisis.

In these unprecedented circumstances there is a danger that financial targets are met by the rationing of existing inefficient care when, instead, the active involvement of influential GPs could radically improve care so that it is both better and cheaper - and meets the needs of patients rather than organisations.

Indeed GPs need to be pivotal in the design and delivery of the new forms of care that will be necessary.

This does require the development of GPs who are better able to understand the system and its points of leverage. Also GPs who are able to both collaborate and challenge effectively. In short GPs who are (and who are recognised to be) part of the solution rather than the problem, and treated with the respect attached to that.

That is just what RCGP leadership programme is about.

Because we understand GPs inside out, as well as the wider systems in which they are operating, we are able to challenge and support them as they develop new insights, new behaviours and new patterns of influencing.

It is a programme that is entirely independent of NHS management structures so it allows GPs the opportunity to think for themselves about the best ways forward for their patients, local services, and their profession.

We have designed the RCGP leadership programme to be a life changing experience, and one which enables them to be very much more influential and in the process regaining the enthusiasm for general practice that many have lost. You may like to read below some of the comments of past participants.

I know you will be aware of GPs who would benefit from this programme – could I ask you to pass this information on to them, and also perhaps to consider it yourself?

Programme information

The programme is run over a twelve month period and includes a mixture of intensive 'class room' work, tutorial support and on-line study and reflection that can be timed to meet the participants own availability. It involves attendance at four Friday/Saturday 'weekends' and five additional tutorial days over a twelve month period, plus private study of some 4-5 hours a week.

The residential workshops are a stimulating mixture of theory input, discussion and debate, reflection, observation and feedback. The tutorial days are an opportunity to reflect on experience and consolidate learning. In between these participants will have a programme of reading and visits, and will also have access to a process of 'supported learning' - a form of on-line coaching. This combination of learning approaches ensures that they are supported over the whole twelve month period and that their learning is consolidated and integrated so that it becomes part of their everyday behaviour.

One significant feature of the programme, in addition to the calibre of the other participants and the programme team, is a number of renowned and influential individuals who are keen to contribute their own reflections and indeed some of their own contacts and networks to help participants become as influential and effective as possible.

And the programme continues to support participants once they have become alumni. Previous cohorts have remained actively involved and continue to work with us as alumni, to grow in their local leadership roles and further develop their skills. This year's summer school for alumni has contributions from Professor Henry Mintzberg and Dame Barbara Young.

For those who wish, there is also the option of gaining academic credits at postgraduate level.

Reflections of participants

- I realise that I wasted the first 20 years of my practice, this has made such a difference to everything I do
- I'm totally enthused about the programme – when I think about myself when I started and now – I recognise I don't have to drive everything forward myself – by listening and leading from behind I'm more effective and a lot calmer
- It is really making me think – opening up avenues I'm finding fascinating
- This is opening up a new world: a new language, syntax, a new way of thinking
- Now that I understand these ideas and tools I realise that some of the managers I deal with aren't using them very well – so I'm really having an impact on the quality of services
- I've used loads of the tools and the reading, and I've been able to challenge, constructively, the strategy of the local PCO

- It's been very useful in negotiating with others. I do much more analysis now of the way they are thinking and behaving and how I need to behave to help them to hear me
- It's had a profound impact on where I see my career going. It's helped me see again what it is I most care about
- When I look at how I've changed, at what I'm doing, this had had a big impact
- I see people all the time who need a programme like this!!

Further information

If you would like more information on the programme or would like to talk through the programme please do not hesitate to contact us through Julie Hargreaves, Executive Education Administrator, University of Exeter Business School, telephone 01392 723770 or email Julie.Hargreaves@exeter.ac.uk

If you would like to contact some of our alumni or current participants please let us know and we will put you in touch.

Regards

Valerie Iles
Programme Director

