



Welcome to Thrive!



The last few months at the Smethwick Medical Centre Group have been very exciting and the next few promise to be just as exhilarating.

There have been many developments to our services over the past year and the purpose of this newsletter is to keep you up to date with what's going on.

This newsletter will come out every three months and will let you know about news from the practices, introduce you to members of staff and tell you what events are coming up and how you can get in touch with us. The Smethwick Medical Centre Group

prides itself on being long-established and well rooted in the local community. We are committed to providing the best healthcare for our local community because the community is at the heart of everything we do.

You may be wondering why we chose the name Thrive. We believe in enhancing our community's quality of life, but not just when you are ill. We want you to thrive and be healthy using our wide range of extended care services.

Being dedicated to promoting healthcare in the community we understand that we must meet the needs of individual patients and tailor our services to what the community needs. To help us communicate better with you we strive to speak your

language; whether that is through providing multi-lingual staff or just making sure we explain things to you in a way that makes sense. In the first issue of Thrive we share the great news that Dr Menon and his team at Rood End Medical Centre have joined us to create a lasting partnership. Also, you may be aware of our service re-design where we aim to work together with our patient groups to provide the best medical healthcare for our community. As part of putting the community at the heart of our work we would love to hear from you. Why don't you email us at thrive@smethwickmc.co.uk

Dr Niti Pall, GP Partner

More benefits as practices join forces

Rood End Medical, led by Dr Gopi Menon, has formed a partnership with the Smethwick Medical Centre Group. Now Dr Menon and his team have joined with Smethwick and Hollybush Medical Centres, the three practices now provide over 12,000 residents in the local area with Sandwell's most advanced medical facilities.

The partnership with Dr Menon's practice will enormously improve the facilities at Rood End and will provide a significant extension to the services it can offer.

Over the coming months there will be a number of changes and improvements at Rood End Medical Centre. Now services will include same-day appointments, telephone advice, extended opening times from 8am-8pm, specialist nursing, plus availability of female doctors and nurses. There will also be multi-lingual staff on hand to cater for everyone in the community.

Dr Menon opened his practice in the early 1990s and is well respected in the Langley and Rood End area. The Rood End Medical Centre is well-established and will greatly benefit from this new partnership with the Smethwick Medical Centre Group. The intention is to invest heavily in the centre as part of a longer term programme aimed at providing the highest level of care for the existing and new patients at Rood End.

Dr Menon has been in discussions with the Smethwick Medical Centre Group for some time, with the increased emphasis on primary and preventative care. Patients will now benefit from the combined resources of the three centres.



Dr David Morris, a partner at the Smethwick Medical Centre, welcomes Dr Menon to the group

At the Smethwick Medical Centre Group we are committed to providing the best quality extended care services that don't just help people when they are ill, but when they are well too.

By combining the well-established practices at Smethwick and Hollybush with Rood End we will be able to promote healthcare both in the practices and in the wider community. Together with Dr Menon's team we believe the best healthcare, in a way that is accessible to all, is now available to all of our registered patients.



What does the merger mean for me?

We realise that the partnership between Smethwick and Hollybush Medical Centres and Dr Menon's practice will generate a lot of interest. We hope the following helps to explain why we have taken this step.

Q. Why are you doing this?

A. Patients of both practices receive the highest level of personal attention and medical care already, but by combining forces with the Smethwick Medical Centre Group - whose work in specialist areas is acknowledged nationally - we will be able to offer a greater range of services.

Q. What's the reason for the takeover?

A. It's really more of a partnership, and will allow us to provide a wider range of services, already available to Smethwick MC patients, to the patients registered at Rood End.

Q. Why join with another medical practice?

A. It gives a greater range of clinical expertise - for instance, Smethwick Medical Centre has specialist Diabetes nurses who help sufferers of Diabetes to better manage their conditions.

Q. Will I still be able to see Dr Menon?

A. Dr Menon will be working until the end of August, at which point he will be having a well-earned break. We hope to see Dr Menon back when we move to the new premises later this year.

Q. Will the opening hours change?

A. The opening hours for the surgery are actually increasing. You will now be able to make appointments from 8:30am until 8pm.

Q. Will the staff being staying the same?

A. All of the existing staff will remain.

Q. Will other parties have access to my medical records?

A. Your records will remain within Rood End Medical Centre, but as there will be more doctors and nurses working on your care, there will inevitably be more clinicians looking at your records.

Q. What do you mean by improvements?

A. New services to be introduced at Rood End Medical Centre will include same-day appointments, extended opening from 8am to 8pm, specialist nursing, and more female doctors and nurses. There will also be multi-lingual staff.

Q. Is the practice going to move?

A. We intend to move to brand new premises later this year. Rest assured that this will be in the immediate vicinity to where we are now.

Q. What is the arrangement with the pharmacy next door?

A. The Masters Pharmacy has been operating from premises behind the surgery since their premises were destroyed by a road accident in July 2007. Building work has already started to rebuild the pharmacy and this is due to be completed in autumn 2009.

Q. Will I have to go to Smethwick Medical centre for treatment?

A. All day-to-day GP and nurse appointments will be held at Rood End Medical Centre. In the future, if you need to be referred for other specialist services,

you may need to travel to Smethwick Medical Centre, or another medical centre.

Q. What if these arrangements don't suit me?

A. You will be given a choice of where to receive services through the Choose and Book system.

Q. Can I move practices?

A. Any patient has the option to change their registered practice at any time, but we hope you will see the improvements we are making and stay with us for many years to come.

Q. Is there a website with more information?

A. Yes, you can go to www.roodendmc.co.uk or www.smethwickmc.co.uk

Q. How are you telling people about what is happening?

A. Details can be found on the websites (see above), patient newsletters, notice boards, during consultations and in the local press.

Q. Will the procedure for repeat prescriptions change?

A. No.

Q. Will I have to phone a different number to book my appointments?

A. No. The number for booking appointments at Rood End Medical Centre remains 0121 544 8666.

Service Redesign: The Future

With the help of its patients the Smethwick Medical Centre Group are redesigning the way our day-to-day services are carried out.

We want to create tailored healthcare that gives patients what they need when they need it.

Engaging with the people in our community is an innovative move and by speaking to patients where they work, go for a drink, shop and worship we can build the service around local requirements.

Service redesign is also pioneering personal care packages which seek to help patients in their own homes rather than coming into the practice. Also, the Smethwick Medical Centre Group is working with complementary therapists to look for alternative solutions to patients having to go to hospital for treatment.

To ensure the services are delivered in a timely manner the clinical staff will be streamlined into effective multi-disciplinary teams to quickly and effectively help patients. The Smethwick Medical Centre Group is proud to deliver

the highest level of patient care, however long a patient needs care. Service redesign is looking at ways to deliver the best long term patient care as well as treating those with short term illnesses.

New strategies are being developed for patients to help each other; by involving community members, patients can attend group consultations where they can share experiences and tips for managing their long term conditions like asthma and diabetes.

Service redesign is a unique approach to providing healthcare for the local community. The Smethwick Medical Centre Group puts the patient at the heart of delivering tailored care. The services provided are flexible to ensure patients get quality care that enables them to lead fulfilling lives.

We hold quarterly meetings where we update on our progress with this programme and its open to all of our patients. Our next meeting is due to take place on 3rd November. Please email your details to thrive@smethwickmc.co.uk if you would like to attend.

Profile: Team member Christine

What is your job title?

Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP)

What is your role at Smethwick Medical Centre?

I help patients who are acutely ill; I give them a thorough assessment so I can prescribe appropriate treatment. I also manage telephone appointments and home visits so patients do not have to come into the centre. I'm part of an on call team to provide support for queries from patients ringing us.

What's the best part of your job?

I love the variety, and the opportunity to mentor and support the nursing team. I feel I'm a team member of a forward-thinking organisation which prioritises patient care delivery and is very good at communicating with the staff. I like being able to work on my own but to have support from the doctors and staff when I need it.

What's the worst part of your job?

Time; I know it's always a factor for any organisation, but I would always like to have more hours in the day! Also, needless to say at the moment: swine flu!

What's your best piece of health advice for us?

Health promotion is key! Take advantage of screening programmes, and take some responsibility for your own health state, particularly long term conditions.

How do you hope to develop the practice in the future?

I would value the opportunity to develop my role further, perhaps focusing on a specialist area. Also, I would like to promote proactive healthcare in addition to reactive healthcare and extend patient participation and expert patient programmes.

What's the best thing about working in Smethwick?

I love the diverse community, the abundant local services and how we are really close to the city centre.

In five words, what does your work do for the community?

Enhances access for patient population.

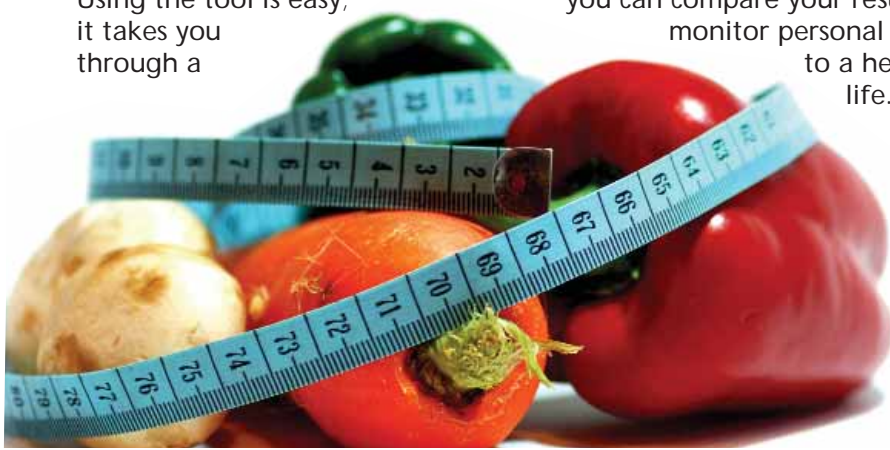
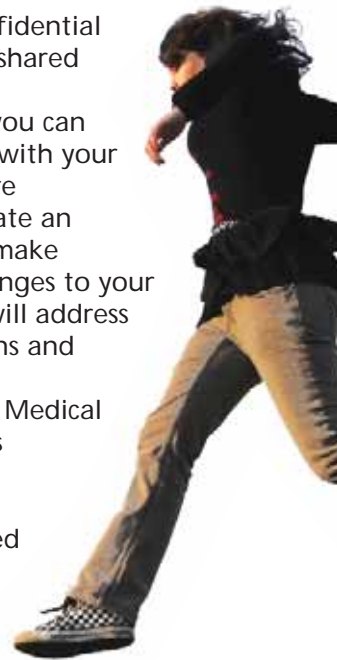


Plant the seeds to better health

Being fit and healthy is important to all of us. We are increasingly aware of how what we do, and what we eat, affects how we feel and go about our everyday lives. Though often it is easy to work out where you are going wrong - too much fast food, not walking enough or unhealthy habits such as smoking - it is more difficult to work out ways to change. At the Smethwick Medical Centre Group the team have implemented an online tool to help patients to help themselves. The internet-based personal health assessment is a simple system to help make a lasting difference to your life if you want to lose weight, eat more healthily, get in shape, relieve stress or just feel better. Using the tool is easy; it takes you through a

series of questions at your own pace and allows you to pick a programme right for you, based on the assessment. There is a simple questionnaire which is confidential and will ask you to provide information about your health habits and your family health history to obtain a personal status of your current health. At the end of the assessment, an easy-to-follow report will help you see where your health is at risk and what you can do about it. The best part about the assessment tool is that it can give guidance and support to help improve overall health or a specific need, not just once but every time you log on. The tool is password-protected and saves any previous assessments so you can compare your results and monitor personal progress to a healthier life. It is

completely confidential and cannot be shared by others. If you choose, you can work together with your GP or healthcare provider to create an action plan to make sustainable changes to your daily life that will address any key concerns and health risks. The Smethwick Medical Centre Group is committed to tailoring the services provided to meet the needs of the patients. By creating an innovative online resource like the personal health assessment, healthcare is taken out into the community and enables people to be proactive about taking care of their own health. **For more information and to register for the personal health assessment go to:** www.smethwickmc.co.uk



Events



**Friday 18th
September**
Health Awareness
Fun Day

Time: 10am-2pm
Location: Asda,
Cape Hill



**Tuesday 3rd
November**
Service Redesign -
Quarterly Forum

Time: 12.30pm-2.30pm
Location: To be
confirmed

What to do if you think you may have Swine Flu

Got flu? Stay at Home

If you experience a sudden fever, cough, headache, sore throat, tiredness, aching muscles, chills, sneezing, runny nose, diarrhoea or vomiting, you may have Swine Flu. For most people this is a mild illness and you should start to feel better after a few days without needing to go to your GP or Accident & Emergency (A&E).

Help yourself and others by not spreading the virus. The best thing you can do is stay at home, rest, drink plenty of fluids and take over-the-counter flu remedies to help relieve the symptoms.

Summary

1. If you feel very unwell
 - Check your symptoms online at

www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu or call the Swine Flu Information Line on 0800 1 513 513

2. Still concerned?
 - If you have taken these steps and are still concerned call NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 or your GP for more advice
3. Please do not go to Accident & Emergency (A&E)
 - Unless you are seriously ill

Important – call your doctor if you think you have Swine Flu, and:

- Are pregnant
- Aged 65 or over
- Have a long-term condition such as diabetes or heart disease
- Have a child under the age of five showing symptoms

Pneumovax vaccine help for over 65s

Everyone is talking about the Swine Flu Pandemic - but there is more to come. The current particular mild swine flu pandemic is likely to mutate into a more serious virus in the autumn, which may affect the chest and lungs. This could cause pneumonia, a potentially serious illness for those over 65, or those with conditions such as diabetes, asthma or heart disease.

A commonly used vaccine called Pneumovax has been on the market for many years and will protect against pneumonia. People only need to have one injection of this vaccine. Nurse-led Pneumovax immunisation clinics will be set up within the next few weeks and we will be writing to everyone over the age of 65 years who has never had a Pneumovax injection,

inviting them to have this very important vaccination.

We would normally give the Pneumovax injection at the same time as the annual flu injection, but this year is different. We understand that the Department of Health will be providing us with the new Swine Flu vaccine, as well as the usual annual flu vaccine, which will mean two injections this year. For anyone needing a Pneumovax injection, it would mean three injections in one appointment. We feel it would be better to give the Pneumovax injection earlier than the other two. The doctors feel very strongly that this injection is so important that they want to encourage anyone who is invited to book an appointment.

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