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An Update from BAPEN

The first few months of 2021 have been very difficult for many, especially healthcare professionals on the front line of services.

In my professional career, I have never faced such a challenging set of circumstances, and I am sure that is the case for many. I think for most people beyond the healthcare profession, and indeed for some within it, nutrition is not front of mind right now. However, a focus on nutrition as the bedrock of health and recovery has never been more important, and I hope those of us with that outlook can continue to communicate that where possible.

COVID service improvement and innovation winners

In the midst of such difficult times, it is all the more important to shine a light on acts of inspiration and ingenuity. In this spirit, towards the end of last year, we created the COVID Service Improvement and Innovation awards. The pandemic has required clinical teams across the country to rapidly adapt their working practices, and we wanted to celebrate some of the best examples of these innovations and adaptations. I would like to congratulate all those who submitted entries but, in particular, our joint winners, University Hospitals of Leicester and NHS Surrey Heartlands CCG & Royal Surrey Hospital. University Hospitals of Leicester responded to the increasingly high numbers of COVID-19 patients in their Adult Intensive Care Unit by working to innovatively preserve PPE through a range of adaptations to usual practice. NHS Surrey Heartlands CCG & Royal Surrey Hospital implemented a post-hospital discharge early intervention clinic (EIC) to improve patient outcomes via inter-organisational practice. These two submissions particularly impressed the panel as instances of resilience and flexibility despite huge pressures. If you would like to read more about both of these inspiring responses to the pandemic, as well as other truly commendable entries, you can do so on our website at: www.bapen.org.uk/nutrition-support/good-practice-in-nutritional-care/bapen-service-improvement-and-innovation-awards.

COVID resources

Back in March last year we got moving quickly with developing resources to support healthcare professionals working during the response. The resources are excellent and are still relevant. If you haven't had a chance to look at them or would like to refresh, I would urge you to visit the page. I would draw your attention to our Aide Memoire on nasogastric tube placement checks. You can read this at: www.bapen.org.uk/pdfs/covid-19/aide-memoire-ngt-placement-13-05-20.pdf.

Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGP) Alliance

You may recall that I have previously highlighted BAPEN's efforts alongside other professional organisations and trade unions to campaign for appropriate recognition of a range of procedures as aerosol-generating. At the time of writing, the call for enhanced personal protective equipment

(PPE) following a disappointing decision not to change the existing guidance is particularly busy. The AGP Alliance now comprises of 11 organisations, so the weight of professional opinion behind this issue is quite extraordinary. We have been pleased to see some good reporting on the issue in the media; this is clearly a matter of public interest and we hope to see some positive change soon.

Earlier this year, Fresh Air NHS – a group of frontline healthcare workers and supporters who recognise the dangers the airborne virus presents to NHS staff – wrote an open letter to Boris Johnson and the devolved administrations calling on the government to improve ventilation of care settings and to upgrade respiratory PPE to the much more protective FFP3 masks.

Get involved with BAPEN this year

A new year brings new opportunities for activity within BAPEN. We are always on the lookout for new members, and it would be fantastic to see our community grow further so that we can stay as connected as possible during this time. We are keen for more people to join us and consider taking on roles of responsibility, so keep an eye out for opportunities! If you haven't yet joined us as a member, I do think this year may be a good year to change that. We are determined to be active and supportive throughout this difficult period, campaigning for what we believe patients and professionals need during these unique times.

Our Annual Conference is scheduled for 30th November – 1st December. Fingers crossed we will be able to welcome you all in person to the Hilton Brighton Metropole!

Our webinar-led Annual Conference in 2020 may not have been our original plan but it was a tremendous success, and we are hugely grateful to our marvellous panel of speakers, everybody on our Programmes Committee who coordinated the effort, and everybody who attended. If you are a BAPEN member, you can still watch all the webinars on demand at your own convenience for free. Please visit our website to do so: www.bapen.org.uk/resources-and-education/meetings/annual-conference/webinar-series-2020-presentations.

Thank you once again for all your hard work and demonstrations of tremendous productivity in the face of adversity. Keep well.

For our COVID-19 resources visit:

www.bapen.org.uk/resources-and-education/education-and-guidance/covid-19

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