

Plenary Session Highlights

Fit for the future: an optimistic view of respiratory care



A discussion led by **Carol Stonham MBE**, Executive Chair PCRS

Our Executive Chair, Carol Stonham MBE, officially opened the PCRS Respiratory Conference 2019 with a plenary session taking an optimistic view of the future of respiratory care in the UK. Carol invited the audience to imagine the NHS Long Term Plan had reached maturity. Imagine – it is 2029 and respiratory disease is well and truly on the map, with equal importance to cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and mental health. This is the goal and our task now is to get us there.

ment of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, referrals and uptake are far below recommended levels. How can we improve this situation? Selling PR to patients in a simple language and encouraging them to attend was high on the panel recommendations but encouraging referrals is also important. Simple things such as providing patients attending PR with thank you postcards to send back to their referring GP can also have an impact on referral levels.



Carol shared her view of the progress made in recent years with an increased focus on prevention and smoking cessation, addressing health inequalities, achieving earlier diagnosis, utilizing artificial intelligence to support and facilitate diagnosis, expanding pulmonary rehabilitation services and referrals, improvements in care delivery and medicines optimisation as well as staff recruitment, education and retention and a greener approach to healthcare. Real progress has been made in all these areas and we need to keep up this momentum and continue to drive improvements in respiratory service provision.

Supporting patients to quit smoking continues to be a challenging area as services are squeezed, but there is also that we can still do. Around 72% of health care professionals (HCPs) are 'Very Brief Advice' (VBA) trained and Carol charged everyone with the task of spreading the word and inspiring colleagues to 'get VBA trained'.



Encouraging everyone to maintain their own health should be a critical focus of all primary care interactions with patients. Knowing the social and support services in your own area as well as peer support groups will enable social prescribing that could address fundamental issues such as loneliness that can drive down patient health and increase their attendance in primary care. Utilizing the full range of advice and support services provided by community pharmacies is another way of ensuring patients get the care they need and helping them to look after their own respiratory health. Carol encouraged all HCPs to seek to approach and influence service delivery through their Clinical Commissioning Groups and Primary Care Networks, "Be rude, be a pain and champion respiratory service provision."



After sharing her vision, Carol opened up a panel discussion around several key areas that she felt will be key in driving improvements in respiratory health in the coming years. The panel included **Dr Katherine Hickman**, a General Practitioner and PCRS Executive Vice-Chair Elect, **Deidre Sidaway**, a respiratory specialist nurse, **Darush Attar-Zedah**, a pharmacist and PCRS Executive Committee member and **Mike McKeivitt**, Director of Patient Services at the British Lung Foundation.



The first of these is pulmonary rehabilitation (PR). While PR is proven to be effective in the manage-