

News Release

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GP COMMISSIONERS CAN TAKE AWAY CINDERELLA STATUS OF EYE HEALTH SAYS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PRIMARY CARE LEAD

Emerging GP Consortia have the chance to get rid of eye health's "Cinderella Status" in terms of local health priorities, according to Jill Matthews, National Implementation Director for Primary Care Improvement. Speaking on the eve of her presentation at the Local Optical Committee Support Unit's Training & Development roadshow for Eye Care Professionals in Nottingham, she went on to say,

"Vulnerable groups must be a priority when local health services are commissioned, and that includes eye care. Leaving eye care services as a low priority means that for example the elderly, who are more likely to experience problems of sight loss may not get the easy access they need to early detection and treatment of eye conditions close to home. To ensure high quality accessible eye care for everyone, Commissioners have a real opportunity to utilise the skills and expertise of opticians and optometrists to provide enhanced services in the local community. Eye health is a great example of how GPs will be able to work with other clinicians to commission patient focussed services which address the needs of everyone in need, whilst at the same time making better use of NHS resources."

The roadshow has been organised as part of a series of LOCSU training roadshows to provide information for the optical profession, especially members of Local Optical Committees on latest changes in the NHS.

To book a place or find out more details please contact jaquehudson@locsuc.co.uk or ring 0207 202 8156 or fax: 0207 261966

Ends

Notes to editors

- This roadshow has been organised by the Local Optical Committee Support Unit. The Local Optical Support Unit provides support and expertise to Local Optical Committees across England. LOCSU provides quality, practical support to Local and Regional Optical Committees (LOCs/ROCs) in England and Wales to help them to develop, negotiate and implement local objectives in respect of primary eye care services.
- Jill Matthews has been on secondment to the Department of Health since September 2008. As National Implementation Director of the Primary Care Improvement team, she has made great strides to improve the commissioning of primary care services through the implementation of a national improvement programme, co-produced with SHAs and PCTs to help PCTs address the strategic, leadership and operational challenges in driving up the quality of primary care commissioning. Involved in Primary Care Development at Trent SHA since 2003,
 - Jill enjoyed a full and varied career across the NHS. During this time, she was responsible for leading the implementation of the new General Medical Services

Contract for General Practitioners and the new regulatory frameworks for Community Pharmacy. Jill was responsible for Out of Hours arrangements across East Midlands and worked closely with PCTs across the region to develop capability in commissioning the complex primary care agenda.

She chaired the National SHA Primary Care Leads Network, working closely with primary care commissioning teams on the development of tools to support the delivery of new primary care initiatives including Practice Based Commissioning and Alternative Provider Medical Services. She represents SHAs, EPS Implementation Reference Groups, the GP Access Reference Group and the Procurement Reference Group.

Media enquiries

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