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Lambden



So, the coalition Government has made public its agreement and we know what it intends to do in respect of the NHS. Many of us desperately hoped, in a Conservative Government, that Andrew Lansley might suggest a period of 'steady as she goes' to allow all the changes of recent years to bed in and give the NHS staff time to recover from the change fatigue that has affected everyone from cleaners to Chief Executives!

That hope was even stronger when the coalition was announced on the basis that finance and voting changes might occupy all their thoughts.

Certainly, for many NHS organisations already deeply embedded in trying to achieve financial stringencies, it is a very difficult period and many staff are unsettled and uncertain about their jobs.

However, all such hope was forlorn. The announcement has been made. For GPs it is a bit of a curate's egg. It is good that, apparently, the GP role as a patient guide through the health system will be strengthened but surely even someone with minimal understanding of health will grasp the fact that to allow a patient to register with any GP irrespective of geography will be madness.

Anyone who has been ill knows that, when they are well it is true that they would like to pop in to a GP near work for their verruca

cure or even their blood pressure check but as soon as they are ill they want to get home and will expect a GP locally there to provide care.

Continuity of care will finally be blown out of the water and overall care and safety will suffer as a result. Will GPs be available on tap?

Let us hope that sanity returns and the ministers understand that the overwhelming opposition to 'registering where patients want' has a basis in common sense and good medicine.

Who will visit if illness results in being housebound? In any case extended-hours has, at least in part, addressed the issue of access already.

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that the overwhelming opposition to 'registering where patients want' has a basis in common sense and good medicine.

The Conservative promise; to abandon targets looks to have been abandoned. I was hoping that the Quality and Outcomes Framework might bite the dust but only really because GPs waste so much time trying to manipulate patient data to fit, conveniently, into target 'boxes' to win the points. And, we all know what points mean!

I suppose we shall cope; we always do and it is probably a sign of old age (mine!) that we seem to move ever further from good quality practice based care where the doctor knew all his or her patients and did what was best rather than what fitted a target.

So, the three pieces of advice for GPs approaching the new coalition world; brace yourself, gird your loins and have several glasses of red wine.

