I would like to begin by reflecting on an important development that has worked exceptionally well even though there were initial concerns and a few early challenges.

**Medical Examiner Role – One Year On (Since September 2024)**

A year after the mandatory introduction of the Medical Examiner (ME) role, the process has proven to be both effective and efficient. From a GP practice perspective, there were understandable concerns that the new system might slow down death registration. However, our experience has been very positive.

The ME service has worked seamlessly with practices, ensuring clear communication, timely reviews, and sensitive support for families. As a result, deaths are being registered promptly, and families are receiving reassurance and guidance throughout the process. We are pleased and reassured that this important change has enhanced quality and safety without introducing delay or unnecessary complexity.

**Process for an Expected Death at Home**

* **Notification** – When a patient dies at home, a family member or health professional contacts the GP practice to report the death.
* **Referral to the ME** – The practice refers the case to the Medical Examiner, providing the likely cause of death and a summary of the patient’s medical notes from the last 3 months.
* **ME Review** – The Medical Examiner reviews the referral form and medical notes to confirm the proposed cause of death.
* **Family Contact** – The ME contacts the family to confirm key details, such as their chosen funeral director, whether burial or cremation is planned, and to ask whether there are any concerns about the care their loved one received.
* **Confirmation to GP** – Once confirmed, the ME provides the cause of death to the GP, enabling the doctor to complete the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD).
* **Return of Certificate** – The completed MCCD is returned to the Medical Examiner, who then emails it to the Hertfordshire Registration Service.
* **Registration Appointment** – The ME office telephones the family once the certificate has been issued, enabling them to book an appointment to register the death.

This structured, collaborative approach ensures a smooth, dignified, and efficient process supporting both families and healthcare professionals during a very difficult time.

**Staffing Update**

Dr Tish Ganandran will be increasing his sessions to four days a week, and Simon, our long-standing paramedic, will now be working every Monday and Friday. This additional cover is in place to support the practice while Dr Sharif undergoes treatment, expected to continue until spring next year. Although there were some donor-related delays at the start, her treatment is now underway, and we all wish her the very best in her recovery.

Best wishes

Andrew