Student volunteers working in general practice in response to Covid-19

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In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, medical and other healthcare students have offered their support in incredible ways, with large numbers offering their time and skills on a voluntary basis.

The College wishes to offer its appreciation to all those offering to support the NHS during this time and those volunteering their services to general practice.

We are keen to ensure the following statement of expectation issued by Medical Schools Council, General Medical Council and Health Education England regarding medical student volunteers in the NHS, is widely publicised and adhered to. It is important to note that all student volunteers must first request permission and approval from their parent medical school. No GP practice should accept a student volunteer who does not have evidence of approval.

The College will be looking to provide further support regarding student volunteering in the form of advice and guidance for medical students, GPs and practices alike. These resources will be made available here when they become available.

Undergraduate teaching in general practice

Considering the challenge and uncertainty posed by Covid-19, undergraduate general practice has been severely affected, with many community placements cancelled across the UK.

We wish to extend our appreciation to all UK medical schools and their students who have had to dramatically alter the way in which they are delivering their teaching, with many moving to online teaching methods at very short notice.
The RCGP have been working closely with the Society for Academic Primary Care (SAPC) to aid medical students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both organisations believe it is important that medical students are provided with support and resources to further their learning at this time. We have decided to accelerate the publication of their most recent work entitled ‘Learning general practice’ - a comprehensive learning and teaching aid for medical students and GP tutors alike.

The resources on offer will provide valuable learning opportunities for medical students at this time. These resources can be found on the RCGP undergraduate page rcgp.org.uk/undergraduate.

Medical students can become RCGP members for free and again access to support, advice and educational resource.

Written by Professor Mike Holmes

Mike Holmes is a GP in Yorkshire and Vice Chair of the Royal College of GPs with responsibility for Membership and the International work of the College. He has been a Partner with Haxby Group since 2002 caring for 50,000 patients in the cities of York and Hull and part of At Scale Collaborative. Mike is a Director of Nimbus Care Ltd caring for 130,000 patients in York and is working with all the practices to develop a Primary Care Home model of care.