Dear Colleagues

December 2016

We are fast approaching the time for drafting ARM motions.

As you know, we receive many more motions than we can ever debate and your agenda committee endeavour to maintain balance by providing an ample amount of speakers for each issue. This ensures that each topic, highlighted to us as priority issues for doctors, receives diverse and informed input from ARM representatives.

There may be occasions when a really good subject is submitted, but perhaps details are not quite right, or the wording is ambiguous – making it difficult for your agenda committee to prioritise it. This year, a number of resources are being made available to provide colleagues with motion guidance and expert support in the lead up to the 2017 ARM.

As a result of the current rate of change you are all experiencing, we are trialling a new approach to the ARM this year that utilises in-house expertise to highlight topical areas of interest emerging on the health-policy horizon, as well as identify any gaps in policy, or policy ambiguity. We therefore will be sending out a series of policy briefings with the pre-ARM D4 circular on 24 February 2017.

The same circular will be reminding you to submit motions by 9am on 7 April 2017. We realise that many of you may have already scheduled your divisional and regional council meetings for 2017; however, we wanted to give you as much notice as possible to inform you of this change. It might be helpful for your division to schedule a meeting within this window to select motions for submission. Just to reassure you, your division or committee will of course be able to generate motions outside of these briefing areas - this new approach is not designed to limit the scope of your motions, but to act as a helpful tool.

This year, we are pleased to announce that colleagues will be receiving pre-ARM briefings on the following topics:

1. Implications of EU referendum
2. Career Choice and Training Pathways
3. Equality and Inclusion (Gender, Race, Disability)
4. Achieving Sustainability (Integration, funding, STPs, Social Care funding)
5. Global Health and Immigration Detention (Access to healthcare for vulnerable groups)
6. Decriminalisation of Abortion

Should you have any questions, please contact Jacqui Connolly at jconnolly@bma.org.uk.

Additionally, please be reminded that the BMA motion drafting service will be running again this year, which offers support and advice to anyone considering submitting a motion to the ARM or other BMA conferences. You can access these resources at: www.bma.org.uk/writingmotions

You will also have the opportunity to request personal and tailored advice by emailing info.motions@bma.org.uk to receive assistance from a member of BMA policy staff who can provide information and factual advice, up until the deadline for receipt of motions (Friday 7 April 2017, 9 am).
One of the BMA’s strengths is that we receive motions on any BMA-appropriate subject our members feel should be raised. We do need to ensure that submitting constituencies are more than just a post-box, and have agreed that it is something that the RB should consider – so do please make sure that discussions are properly held in quorate and that an audit trail exists in the rare circumstances where difficult questions have to be asked.

This approach creates both great richness at the ARM and also helps the BMA focus on members’ priorities. Of course, time constraints can mean that your agenda committee occasionally are not able to anticipate the mood of the meeting, so don’t forget that we have the chosen motions ballot which aims to correct things in those cases.

**ARM 2017 Debates and Motions**

The agenda committee receive a great many motions which mirror previous debates and policies – and they do appreciate new topics and ideas to keep the ARM fresh and relevant. Whilst we anticipate that the majority of local discussion will currently be around contractual matters, these will also be the subject of branch of practice conferences. This may guide how and which motions you feel the ARM should consider, although the agenda committee will of course do its very best with all the issues you send in.

I look forward to seeing you soon

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Anthea Mowat
BMA Representative Body Chair