



Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board

Media Release
16 July, 2004

PMETB to defer recommendation on going live

The Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB) announced today that following a scheduled review of progress towards assuming its full statutory responsibilities, it would defer until the autumn making a recommendation to health ministers on PMETB's start date. Professor Clive Morton also announced that he will be standing down as chair of PMETB from 1 August. Professor Morton fully supports the decision to defer, indeed recommended it to the Board, but feels that he can no longer continue to give the intensive commitment to PMETB required in the run up to go live.

The scheduled review highlighted the significant progress made since PMETB was established last year, but also underlined the overall scale and complexity of the Board's responsibilities and the issues facing it. In light of this the Board concluded that it would continue detailed work over the summer before recommending a start date.

Professor Clive Morton said, "We are very pleased with the progress we have made over the last year. We have come a long way. But we are also sensitive to the size and importance of the task we have been given. Both doctors and patients are depending on us to deliver better training standards and ultimately better patient care. It is vital that when we go live we are able to provide the high quality service expected of us. We want to engage further with stakeholders

through our sub-committees. Securing wider ownership of our policies and rules through consultation will require time. We need too to negotiate service level agreements with the medical royal colleges and other bodies which will be crucial to our success. Our recommendation reflects a sensible approach to managing risk and a proper understanding of our duty to get this right.”

Commenting on his own decision to step down as Chair of PMETB, Professor Morton said:

“I fully support the recommendation to defer, however, it does extend the period of intensive demands on my time. I have taken a measured view of the pressures on my time with the commitment of setting up PMETB together with being Chairman of one of the first wave NHS Foundation Trusts, in addition to running my own business. I am extremely sorry to be leaving PMETB at the end of July but we have successfully completed the foundations for ‘going live’ and it’s a good time to hand over to another chairman – hopefully one who can devote more time in the longer term to the operation of PMETB.

“I wish the Board, Executive, staff and our partners every success in the future. I give heartfelt thanks for all the support I have received and for the many friendships forged.”

Over recent months PMETB has made substantial progress in a number of key areas, including:

- establishing the Board’s executive and policy making structures, including the key assessment and training committees
- developing the process and procedures required to assess the postgraduate training of some doctors who have trained abroad
- adopting existing standards for the certificate of completion of training
- aligning with the Healthcare Commission Concordat on quality assurance

The Deputy Chairman, Dr Peter Simpson, said, “We always intended to review progress in July and we had a good discussion on this at our meeting in Cardiff today. We realize that there is an expectation that we would assume our responsibilities in October this year, but we are certain that there is an even greater weight of expectation to get things right and fair for all. The recommendation to defer a decision on the start date, reflects that commitment. Naturally we are very sorry to see Clive go. He has been a great strength to the Board over the last year but we understand his reasons for stepping down. On behalf of the Board, I wish him every success in the future.”

The key issues that PMETB will be taking forward in the coming months are:

- discussing with health ministers in all four home countries about a recommendation for the go live date
- negotiating and completing service level agreements with the medical royal colleges and other medical bodies involved in postgraduate medical education and training
- establishing an appropriate regime for fees and charges for its services, designed to provide an equitable and transparent fee structure and an independent source of income for PMETB
- developing the processes for people applying for statements of eligibility
- putting in place the quality assurance framework
- establishing rules and procedures in all areas of the Board’s responsibilities

Dr Simpson will act as interim chair of PMETB following Professor Morton’s departure on 1 August.

The Board met in Cardiff on 15th – 16th July.

Notes for editors

The Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB) was established by the General and Specialist Medical Practice (Education Training and Qualifications) Order approved by parliament in April 2003.

It was formed to act independently of government as a professional UK competent authority to supervise postgraduate medical education and training. It will:

- establish standards of, and requirements relating to, postgraduate medical education and training
- secure the maintenance of the standards and requirements established; and
- develop, improve and promote postgraduate medical education and training in the United Kingdom

When it takes up its full statutory responsibilities PMETB will replace the Specialist Training Authority (STA) and the Joint Committee on Postgraduate Training for General Practice (JCPTGP).

Articles 11 and 14 of the Order establishing PMETB, also give the Board responsibility to assess the post graduate training of doctors with both part and full training undertaken elsewhere and who do not satisfy EEA requirements for mutual recognition of qualifications. The order allows any combination of qualifications, training and experience gained anywhere in the world to be evaluated as part of an application for entry to the GMC Specialist Register. The Board will be able to permit these doctors access to the Specialist or General Practitioners Register (the GPs Register is a new register established by the PMETB Order and to be set up by the GMC in the next few years) if their training,

qualifications or experience meet UK standards or, if not, to require them to undertake additional training and assessment either in the UK or elsewhere. specialist register if their training, qualifications or experience meet UK standards or, if not, to require them to undertake additional training and assessment either in the UK or elsewhere.

Professor Clive Morton was appointed as chair of PMETB in July 2003. He is currently Chair of Peterborough Hospitals NHS Trust and an independent leadership and board development adviser and coach.

Dr Peter Simpson is President of the Royal College of Anaesthetists and was appointed to PMETB in October 2003.

PMETB recently appointed a new interim chief executive, Isabel Nisbet. Isabel will take up her post in August and initially she will work alongside the current interim chief executive, Stuart Gray, who announced his retirement in May.

For further information contact:

Richard Astle	Athene Communications	01733 865040 07885 252571
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Julie Morgan	Athene Communications	01733 865040 07810 867229
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Or email: mail@athene-communications.co.uk