**PRESS RELEASE**

**20th March 2015**

**Walk-in service closure**

Residents are reminded that the walk-in service located at the North Chelmsford Healthcare Centre near Sainsbury's in Springfield will close on March 31st.

The GP surgery will remain open at the site, opening for registered patients between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday and for a few hours on a Saturday and Sunday.

The decision to close the walk-in service was made by Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group at its Governing Body meeting in November 2014.

The main objective of the walk-in service was to reduce the number of A&E attendances. In fact, the number of attendances at A&E has increased in the past three years.

The walk-in service was also designed to widen access to GP services, especially for people who are not registered for their local GP.

When reviewing the activity, most people visiting the walk-in service were already registered with a GP responsible for their care. The majority of visits were for minor problems that could be managed with the advice of their own GP or a local pharmacist.

Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (MECCG) is encouraging patients who previously used the walk-in service to think about accessing alternative NHS services rather than just heading A&E at Broomfield Hospital.

Medical Director of Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (MECCG), Dr Donald McGeachy, said: “With the walk-in service closing, it is important that patients think carefully about what NHS service they should access.

“Although the CCG is piloting schemes to help our colleagues at Broomfield Hospital should more people go there to seek treatment after March 31st, patients can also help ease the pressure by using alternative NHS services.

“If you are feeling unwell, or if you are unsure where to go for medical help and advice, call NHS 111 who will direct you to the best health care option. This includes the out of hours GP service that is available throughout evenings during the week, Bank Holidays and all weekend.”
“If it isn’t an emergency, you can make an appointment with your GP or you can visit your local pharmacist who can help you with a range of common complaints such as colds and stomach upsets.”

ENDS

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