4th February 2021

**To All Practices in Surrey and Sussex LMCs**

**Cancard Requests - BMA and RCGP statement on ‘Cancard’**

Some concerns have been raised by GP practices about the **[Cancard UK website](https://www.cancard.co.uk/)** and its proposed ‘GP endorsed’ ID card. The website offers the ability to apply for: ‘A holographic photo ID card. Designed in collaboration with GPs and verified at the patients surgery. The card is for people who qualify for a legal prescription but are unable to afford one.”

Applications are said to have opened on 1 November 2020. The Medicinal Cannabis holographic photo ID card is being offered by Cancard UK to patients who meet the following criteria:-

- Have a diagnosis (confirmed by their GP) that is currently being prescribed for privately.

- Have tried two types of prescription medication or have discussed and discounted these options based on side effect profile or dependence concerns.
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- Are unable to afford a private prescription.

- Are required to be in possession of a small amount of Cannabis in order to manage their symptoms.
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- Are at risk of criminalisation.

The BMA and RCGP supports the use of ‘cannabis-based products for medicinal use in humans’ under the supervision of specialist clinicians or prescription of MHRA authorised licenced products by doctors who have the necessary clinical experience and competences.

These products must have been produced in accordance with the necessary standards for the production of medicinal products in the UK in order to ensure their safety and authenticity. We also support the call for further research into the safety and potential indications for use of these medical products.

The BMA and RCGP cannot however support the use of the Cancard, nor the suggestion that UK registered GPs sign a declaration confirming a diagnosis in order for the card to be issued.

The Cancard UK website states that the Cancard has been designed in collaboration with GPs, but neither the RCGP nor BMA have been formally consulted or given endorsement.

Whilst we sympathise with patients who struggle to pay a private prescription charge, we do not believe that this is a justifiable reason to encourage the purchase of unregulated unlicensed cannabis products from unregulated or illegal dealers.

If a patient is deemed to meet the criteria for an NHS prescription for an MHRA authorised prescriptible product then this may be issued where appropriate. Those patients on low incomes or with medical conditions qualifying for prescription charge exemption will be exempt from prescription charge in line with current regulations.

Read the BMA guidance on [**Cannabis-based medicinal products here**](https://www.bma.org.uk/what-we-do/population-health/prescription-and-illicit-drugs/cannabis-based-medicinal-products)

With best wishes



**Dr Julius Parker**

Chief Executive