

Social Security office to the effect that he has been certified as being unfit to work. This document rather than form Med.3. could be sent to employers.

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REFERENCES

- Crombie D. L. (1973). *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, **23**, 863-79.
Donovan C., Grant D., Woodhall J., Zander I. (1973). *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, **23**, 881-85.
Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners (1973). Editorial, **23**, 833-39.

THE COLLEGE AND ETHICS

Sir,
How refreshing to read of the remarks by Prince Philip regarding the responsibility of the College to pass on the traditional outlook and ethics of our profession.

Many years ago when we were deeply concerned about criteria for membership, it was suggested that each new entrant should be enrolled at a simple ceremony, where he would promise, as far as it was in his power, to uphold the ethics of the profession based on the Hippocratic oath and that this with regular postgraduate study, similar to that practised by our College in Canada, would be sufficient for election.

I feel that many older practitioners who supported the College in its early days and even before its inception, would welcome some initiative from Council as a follow up on our patron's speech.

J. D. CRAIG

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REFERENCE

- Philip, H.R.H. The Prince (1974). *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, **24**, 50-53.

RADIO-PAGING SERVICE

Sir,
The Post Office recently introduced a new automatic, radio-operated, 'bleep' service. This covers an irregularly shaped area extending up to 30 miles south and rather less north of the Thames, between Staines and Goring.

The doctor on call in the practice carries a small instrument in his breast pocket and this gives a 'bleep', similar to that given by systems operated in most hospitals. The signal is actuated by dialling a number specific to the instrument from any Post Office telephone. The doctor responds to the bleep by ringing back to base for the message.

This instrument has been in use, in this four-man practice, for the past year and has proved to be a useful additional item of equipment. It is very reassuring to the ancillary staff to know that they are able to contact a doctor within minutes. In spite of efforts to avoid the problem, there is inevitably some time, during working hours, when no doctor is immediately available at the surgery premises. It had occasionally happened, especially at lunch-time, that all the doctors were out visiting when an urgent call came in. Moreover, when on duty alone at weekends, it is possible to do a series of visits, without reporting back to the base telephone, secure in the knowledge that no messages requiring urgent action have arrived. It enables the doctor on call to be available without being next to a telephone, thus allowing him to attend meetings, entertainments and other activities without making telephone arrangements.

A two-way radio link would give more direct communication, but involves bulkier equipment and is considerably more expensive to install and maintain.

The Post Office charges £5 deposit and £5 monthly rental for the instrument and there is of course, only a need for one instrument for each doctor on call, at any one time. In this group practice of four doctors, one instrument is adequate.

At present, this system is only available in the area mentioned above, and no decision has yet been made about extending the service.

D. J. PRICE

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Nr. Camberley,
Surrey.

MEDICAL VISIT TO THE U.S.S.R.

Sir,
Under the auspices of the Society for Cultural Relations with the Soviet Union and with the cooperation of the Health Workers Union in the U.S.S.R. I am trying to gather a group of doctors and other health workers to visit the U.S.S.R. from the 9-23 September, 1974. The cost at present prices is estimated at £163 all in. We hope that both the organisation and the composition of this group will ensure that the visit is neither a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, nor a search for ammunition for Kremlinologists. We hope to visit various units within a single regional sector, ranging from primary care to a teaching hospital all within the same catchment area.

I would be most grateful if anyone interested would write to me, when I can send further details.

J. Tudor Hart

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