Dear colleague,

This edition of ‘tackle talk’ is a little earlier than normal, as I wanted to take the opportunity to wish all our members a very Happy Christmas and a healthy 2019.

If I reflect on the past year, we continue to make headway with our three aims of the Federation – Supporting men and their families through the network of support groups across the country, raising awareness of the need for earlier diagnosis and campaigning on issues related to prostate cancer. As usual, please find our latest financial summary on page three.

**Support**

As far as support groups are concerned there are now 92 groups in the Federation and I looked back over the past three years and counted up visits to fifty-three of these, so I still have some way to go to meet all those who are helping so much at a local level! On this point, if you would like to hear about what we are doing on behalf of patients I would be happy to plan a visit to your support group – just drop me an email.

At our latest Board meeting last week, we reflected on a healthy financial position, at least for 2019, but we need to raise our game in terms of generating funds for all that we want to do. In the New Year we plan to make an application to the National Lottery for funding support that will enable us to have a more secure future as we try and achieve our aim of having every man diagnosed being signposted to one of our local support groups. Such applications are not simple and may take up to six months but we have engaged an experienced fundraiser who has worked in this field and has had success in previous Lottery applications.

Many of you will be familiar with our Cycle to the Moon - Save a Dad initiative. As a Board we reviewed the progress to date and lessons learnt from our launch earlier this year. We had some success in raising awareness and we are grateful for all those members who contributed to raising funds. Our intention is to relaunch the initiative in the Spring of 2019, and this time we will be putting more effort into seeking support from cycling clubs and sports teams. One new dimension is our plan to target motor cycling clubs where we believe there is a real opportunity to raise awareness, particularly in the classic motorbike scene. So, you may see “Motorcycle to the Moon” as a variant of the message!

**Awareness**

In terms of public awareness of prostate cancer, we see almost daily a report in the media about one new development or another, which in itself is encouraging, but it can be confusing making sense of what is really relevant to most of us and as opposed to what makes a good headline! For us it is about getting the powers-that-be to embrace developments that will lead to better diagnosis.
and treatment. We are just embarking on a public consultation with NICE on revised guidelines for prostate cancer and this should help take us forward. On this note, it is becoming clear that the topic of screening for prostate cancer is being discussed more widely. This is good news and it builds on our push for more informed PSA testing. You can see our latest paper here.

**Campaigning**

Perhaps our most significant push over the last few months has been on campaigning through various channels for a more informed debate about prostate cancer. Along with Orchid Male Cancer, we are involved in setting up an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on male cancer. This will have its inaugural meeting in January and we hope serve to influence politicians on the important issues where we need their help to make progress.

Secondly, with Orchid and the men’s health charity CHAPS, we are planning an event in the House of Commons in February where we hope to explore the case for prostate cancer screening. Key influencers are being invited to this event, sponsored by Lord Ribeiro and Sir Bernard Jenkin MP. I will keep you informed of the outcome of both these initiatives.

Lastly on the campaigning front, a letter is about to go off to Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer at the Department of Health asking for the inclusion of teaching 15-year-old school children about the prostate as part of the ‘personal, social, health and economic’ (PSHE) curriculum. This letter will be co-signed by Prostate Cancer UK, Orchid Male Cancer and the British Association of Urological Surgeons (BAUS). We hope this will kick-start our planned “Save a Dad” initiative.

**Looking forward**

I see 2019 as being another year where we continue to make good progress, supported by our local hard-working members and Trustees. As an aside, we have just been awarded ‘Best patient-led support charity in the UK’ by the GHP Social Care Awards!

Looking to our conference next year, it will be held on June 13th in Edgbaston (same venue as last year). The theme will be ‘Screening for prostate cancer – continuing the debate’. I hope to see as many support groups represented as possible. More details to come on this.

*Best wishes* for now,

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