

PRESS RELEASE

1 April 2009

Services commence in first Equitable Access schemes to go-live

Three of Assura's GP Provider Companies ("GPCos") will today welcome patients to new GP-led health centres which are the result of contracts awarded in the national Equitable Access to Primary Medical Care services (EAPMC) procurement programme.

Bath NHS Healthcare Centre (Assura Minerva LLP), Coventry NHS Healthcare and Walk-in Centre (Assura Coventry LLP) and Stockton NHS Healthcare Centre (Assura Stockton LLP) are the first to launch, out of the 10 schemes which have been awarded to GPCos or where they have been appointed preferred bidder. The remaining seven schemes will be rolled out during the remainder of 2009.

The Centres will offer the communities they serve more choice and access to a GP or nurse and will provide patients in those localities with high quality, easy and convenient access to healthcare. The services are in addition to, and will work alongside and complement, existing GP surgeries in the areas they serve.

The schemes are part of the government's £250 million nationwide funding package to improve access to GP services for patients across the country. This funding will provide an extra 2.5 million appointments across the country per year.

Richard Burrell, chief executive of Assura, said: "We are delighted to see our first three Equitable Access schemes go-live. These are exciting opportunities for our GPCos to extend their services into the communities they serve.

They will be providing patients with greater access and choice of healthcare. They will also be providing people with rapid access to treatment which doesn't require A&E attendance and should therefore help to alleviate pressure on local A&E departments."

The new Centres will have a strong focus on promoting health and reducing health inequalities, particularly for hard to reach groups, in the communities they serve.

ENDS

Press enquiries regarding Assura Group to:

Andrew McKeon, AJM Public Relations. Tel: 01423 734 560; Mobile: 07802 484 155

Louise Bathersby, Assura Group. Tel: 020 7107 3830.

www.assuragroup.co.uk

Notes to Editors:

**Bath NHS Healthcare Centre, Riverside Health Centre, James Street West, Bath BA1 2BT
Tel. 01225 478 811**

www.bathnhshealthcarecentre.nhs.uk

- GP practice and walk-in service open to patients from 8am to 8pm, 365 days a year, with or without an appointment, whether they are registered or not.
- Assura Minerva LLP is providing the service in partnership with Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) Health and Social Care Services and BANES Emergency Medical Services.

**Coventry NHS Healthcare and Walk-in Centre, Stoney Stanton Road, Coventry CV1 4FH
Tel. 0300 200 0060**

www.coventrynhshealthcentre.nhs.uk

- GP practice and walk-in service open to patients from 8am to 10pm, 365 days a year, with or without an appointment, whether they are registered or not.
- Assura Coventry LLP is providing the service in partnership with Coventry Community Health Services, the community services directorate of NHS Coventry.

**Stockton NHS Healthcare Centre, Tithebarn House, High Newham Court, Hardwick,
Stockton-on-Tees TS19 8RH**

Tel. 01642 525 480

www.stocktonnhshealthcentre.nhs.uk

- GP practice and walk-in service* open to patients from 8am to 8pm, 365 days a year, with or without an appointment, whether they are registered or not.
- Assura Stockton LLP is providing the service in partnership with Woodlands Family Medical Centre.

* Centre will open on 1 April with GP practice open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm plus an additional ten hours per week when it has been established as to when that will be most popular with patients. On 1 May the Walk-in service will open from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week.