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## Covid-19: GPs have “stepped up” in time of national crisis, says profession’s leader

Abi Rimmer

GPs have gone the extra mile to support their patients during the covid-19 pandemic and deserve praise for their efforts, the chair of the BMA’s GP committee has said.

Speaking at the 2020 annual conference of England’s local medical committees, Richard Vautrey thanked GPs and their teams for their hard work.

“Thank you to all those in general practice and primary care who have worked tirelessly and with huge commitment and dedication throughout this year, a year like no other,” he said. “Throughout the whole of the covid-19 pandemic, from day one to today, general practice has been open for business.”

But Vautrey also criticised the government’s response to the pandemic. “Guidance was delayed, initiatives too limited, and funding too little,” he said. He said there had been a lack of government funding to cover the additional work done by GP practices early in the pandemic, but said he was pleased that the BMA had secured a further £150m (€168m; \$200m) to support additional capacity in practices.

Commenting on the role that GPs will play in the upcoming covid-19 vaccination campaign, Vautrey said there were no better people to take on the task. “Whether we work in local groups or more regional centres, once a safe and effective vaccine is available, our practice teams will work to the best of our considerable ability to protect our patients as quickly as possible,” he said.

“And while we may have superpowers, we cannot be in two places at once and so we will need the help of everyone, we’ll need to be able to prioritise the rest of our workload and crucially we’ll need the understanding of our patients in doing so. We will need all hands to the pump.”