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Dear Patient

As many of you are aware I have not been in surgery for more than a month now. I had been working part time and had intended to continue for some time.

This July I had been qualified for 40 years and couldn't imagine not continuing to see patients.

However, at the beginning of August I was taken seriously ill and needed to be hospitalised. I was extremely fortunate in that I was treated promptly and effectively and I am gradually making good progress but I have to concede that I will never be fit enough again to face the pressures of being a General Practitioner and practise even on a part time basis. I have always been passionate about my work as a family doctor, caring for all members of the community and being part of so many people's lives in times of joy and sadness. I have never tired of learning about new advances and progress in medicine which had held a constant fascination for me. I have been particularly interested to improve the service to patients with mental illness and felt reassured that particularly during the past year real progress was being made. I have enjoyed immensely nurturing and teaching medical students and witnessing their progress in striving to be our future doctors. I have been very grateful to patients who have supported me in this work.

It would not be appropriate to share details of my illness and I would be grateful if you could respect my privacy and not put the reception staff in a difficult situation. The practice manager, nurse, HCA and receptionists have been amazing in keeping things going and I am so grateful for their steadfastness and loyalty during these past few weeks. Along with my family they have been the main source of strength and support.

As you also aware Dr Livingston has also been on sick leave but we are pleased to say she will back on Monday 5th September and I know she is keen to restore normality once again and practise the high standard of medicine she has always provided. We have enjoyed a very honest, transparent as well as happy partnership and it is with a heavy heart we have to accept it is coming to an end.

Moreover, we are delighted to have appointed Dr Andrew Dharman to work on a regular basis and I know he will be a great asset to the surgery.

My disappointment is that I won't have chance to work with him as he is extremely caring, enthusiastic and has a good sense of humour at the same time as wanting to provide a high standard of care.

Inevitably, there will be changes but I hope this hiatus will give the practice a chance to examine carefully how it functions and hopefully make the sort of changes that will improve the efficiency and efficacy of the running of the practice and yet always keeping it patient- centred. We need your help as patients to help us do this by using the service wisely and treating all our staff with respect so that they can do their best for you.

You have registered with a practice that really cares about its patients and wants to work with you to not only improve your present health, treat any existing problems but assist you in preventing you developing health problems.

If anyone would like to write back to me or reply to this letter, I would be happy to receive these at home. Please give any letters or direct any email to my reception staff who will gladly forward them to me.

Dr J Bayer