

Med1web forms and The European Medical Directory

A number of GPs have in the past completed and signed a Med1web form from NovaChannel AG under the misapprehension that the form offered a free listings service in the European Medical Directory (TEMEDI). However, in the small print there was a clause enabling NovaChannel AG to charge for this service, and some GPs have or are being pursued for payment. Whilst GPs may decide to ignore the requests for payment by the company, there is always the risk that the individual will be obligated under commercial contract law to render the amounts claimed in full plus interest.

NovaChannel AG was a Swiss registered company, and its practices were investigated by the Swiss Office of Fair Trading in 2008. GPC previously wrote to the Swiss Embassy and issued advice to practices based on their response. However, NovaChannel AG has now ceased trading from Switzerland, and it has been brought to our attention that payment for the Med1web forms is now being pursued by United Directories Lda (a Portuguese company). GPC subsequently wrote to the Portuguese Embassy for their views, who undertook to inform the appropriate Portuguese authorities on the matter.

We are aware that some doctors have received letters from United Lda notifying them that their files have been reviewed and that, because they are not independent doctors, their particulars have been deleted from the directory and that the contract is null and void.

We therefore advise all NHS GPs who unwittingly signed up to the Med1web form to contact United Directories Lda asking for their details to be removed from its directory and for any contract to be terminated. The address is: United Directories, Lda, PO Box 1571, 1056-001 Lisbon, Portugal or email: info@med1web.com.

This does mean that anyone signing the form without reading the small print is considered to have entered into a legally binding contract. The decision must rest with the individual or practice as to whether to take the risk of not paying the charge. We accept that the company in question may be relying on the fact that people do not read the small print, and equally, it appears to be the case that they do not begin proceedings for non-payment. However, the BMA cannot advise members to act in any particular way.

This is unlikely to have affected large numbers of doctors, but we are aware of instances where United Directories Lda have accepted that NHS doctors who did sign Med1web forms can consider their contracts annulled. If you are a doctor practising within the NHS and receive a letter of demand from Med1web, you should reply noting that you are NHS registered and asking for the contract to be annulled.

If attempting to have contracts annulled by following the above process, it would be helpful if members then notified the BMA of the outcome. Should United Directories Lda aggressively pursue payments, GPC can notify the Portuguese Embassy. They have offered to pass on specific details to the Portuguese authorities, and GPC can continue to lobby on behalf of members for as long as this problem persists.

Background information and comments on the experiences of others can be found on the following independent external websites:

<http://stopecg.blogspot.co.uk/2009/11/are-united-directorios-lda-expanding.html>

<http://www.hospitaldr.co.uk/blogs/hcsa/be-wary-of-european-medical-directory-scam>

<http://www.mukaumedia.co.uk/temdi-european-medical-directory-scam-decide/>

The above links have been provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or approval by the British Medical Association of any of the products, services or opinions of the corporation, organisation or individual. The British Medical Association bears no responsibility for the accuracy, legality or content of the external site or for that of subsequent links. Contact the external site for answers to questions regarding its content.