



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr D Colquhoun
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18 May 2007

Dear Mr Colquhoun

Many thanks for your kind email of 10th May regarding EDM 1240. While I respect your concerns about the NHS expenditure on homeopathic hospitals, personally I think that as the NHS is in receipt of funding to the tune of over £100 billion its not a case of not enough money to fund cancer treatments its more a case of where and how it is spent .

As you can see from the enclosed standard letter the Conservative Party's view is that there should be a small amount of money made available for homeopathic hospitals.

I fully understand that you may not agree with this position but I thank you for sharing your concerns with me.

Yours sincerely

Mike Penning

enc

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Homeopathic Hospitals – EDM 1240 – April 2007

Thank you for your letter of xxx about NHS homeopathic hospitals

I very much understand and sympathise with your concerns about the future of NHS homeopathic hospitals. Homeopathy and alternative treatments are a valuable resource for doctors to be able to draw upon when offering treatments. Where a doctor and a patient believe that a homeopathic treatment may be of benefit to the patient, I believe doctors should be free to prescribe that medicine.

It is worrying to me that Primary Care Trusts are seeking to cut funding which could threaten the future of homeopathic hospitals. The Government's management of NHS spending has produced a situation whereby the NHS budget has nearly doubled from £57 billion in 1998 to £96 billion this year, and yet last year up to 27,000 jobs were lost, hospitals up and down the country are closing or cutting back services and the NHS as a whole is predicted to finish the year with a deficits totalling £1.3 billion. All the while Patricia Hewitt proclaims last year to be the "best year ever" for the NHS. Weighed down with yet more targets from central government and seeing £1 billion 'top-sliced' from their budgets by the Department of Health to disguise the regional debts, trusts are being forced to cut back on services they have provided for years.

Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that Trusts have decided to take the axe to homeopathic care, as a short term solution to their financial difficulties. I am opposed to these short sighted cuts because, as you will well know, homeopathic care is enormously valued by thousands of people and in an NHS that the Government repeatedly tells us is 'patient-led' it ought to be available where it proves cost and clinically effective.

It is clear that the Government is giving no commitment to safeguard the future of homeopathic treatment on the NHS. I am therefore glad to have this opportunity to sign Early Day Motion 1240. I will also forward your letter to the Secretary of State for Health, Patricia Hewitt MP, so that she can be made aware of the value of homeopathic care to you as a patient.

Let me assure you the Shadow Health Team will continue to hold the Government to account for its gross mishandling of the NHS.