

PRESS RELEASE - General Practitioners Committee West Midlands

For Immediate release – 22nd May 2008

SENIOR WEST MIDLANDS DOCTORS CONDEMN LORD DARZI'S PLANS AND CALL UPON THE PUBLIC TO SUPPORT NHS GENERAL PRACTICE

Senior leaders of family doctors from across the whole West Midlands met in Birmingham this evening (Thursday 22nd May 2008). Dr Ingrams (Secretary, General Practitioners Committee West Midlands (GPCWM)) said:

“We have heard this evening that despite reassurances from Lord Darzi (Health Minister) (1) that ‘all change will be locally-led’ Primary Care Trusts across the West Midlands are still being given no freedom to choose whether to open a new Darzi Health Centre regardless of the need for such a centre, nor are they being given any freedom to choose what the basic configuration of these centres will be.”

“We believe that this lack of choice is resulting in PCTs not being able to fulfil their legal duty of properly consulting the public regarding the planning of the provision of new services(2).”

“In addition Lord Darzi has promised that change will be based on the best available evidence, but the policy of opening new health centres and general practices using short-term, commercial contracts is at best unproven, but with growing evidence that it will lead to a more expensive, less patient focussed service with reduced access for patients with the highest need.”

“Lord Darzi also promises that ‘existing services will not be withdrawn until new and better services are available’, but this seems to be untrue. Opening a new commercialised health centre with guaranteed income will undermine the local existing practices with a high chance of their closure.”

“We (the GPCWM) therefore fully support the BMA’s campaign ‘Support NHS General Practice’, and call upon all residents of the West Midlands who wish to ensure general practice continues to develop and improve and that all patients still have the right to their own GP, to sign the petition at their own surgery, or sign the online petition at www.supportyoursurgery.co.uk (3)”

“Tonight we have heard of patients already demonstrating their overwhelming support across the West Midlands for their surgery and NHS General Practice and signing the petition – we now invite everyone else to do so too.”

Ends

- 1 The “NHS Next Stage Review Leading Local Change” published May 2008 makes five pledges.
- 2 There are two pieces of legislation requiring PCTs to consult on changes to healthcare and they are the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and section 242 of the NHS Act 2006.
- 3 The BMA has organised a nation-wide petition in the shape of a 60th Birthday Card for the NHS running until the 6th June 2008 (www.supportyoursurgery.co.uk).

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