

PRESS RELEASE -

General Practitioners Committee West Midlands

For Immediate release (31st January 2008)

Government policy could ‘wreck’ general practice in the West Midlands say senior GPs

GP leaders from the West Midlands have condemned government plans to force through changes to the GP contract and say it will damage patient care. Dr Grant Ingrams, a GP from Coventry and a member of the BMA’s West Midlands General Practitioners Committee said:

“We have been holding meetings across the West Midlands to tell GPs about the government’s plans. Family doctors have been attending in unprecedented numbers and they are all concerned about future services for their patients.

“This government’s policy of requiring every local health authority to open a new health centre, regardless of need, will destabilise established practices, and could wreck them¹. This will waste Tax payers’ money.”

“The government wants to take funding away from clinical care to fund extended hours² even though it is something only a minority of patients want.”

“Family doctor services have been a success since the start of the NHS, and this modern established service is envied across the world. We deplore this government’s tactics to undermine family doctor services.”

“Transferring family doctor services to large international companies will put shareholders and not patients first.”

“Scarce NHS resources should not be transferred from quality markers to provide extended hours for the benefit of commuters. Family doctors are willing to provide extended hours but they need to be properly resourced so it has no impact on day time care. Family doctors should not be put in the unacceptable position of having to cut back on day time services. This will adversely affect the health care of patients who need and want to see them during the day - their vulnerable patients, elderly patients, and those with severe chronic conditions.”

Ends

1 The “NHS Next Stage Review Interim Report” (‘Darzi’ review) published October 2007 requires every local health authority (Primary Care Trust), to open a new health centre. The government is encouraging large private companies to bid to run these health centres.

² On 21st December 2007 the Government announced that it would impose changes to the GP contract to cover extended hours. In order to fund this they plan to remove quality markers that deal with the care of patients with diabetes, chronic lung disease, heart disease and those at risk of strokes. If an average

practice chooses not to do extended hours they will lose £36,000 per annum. However in some areas there is very little patient demand for extended hours.

Contact:

Dr Grant Ingrams

Secretary, General Practitioners Committee West Midlands,

36 Harborne Road

Edgbaston

Birmingham

B15 3DP

Telephone: 07973 630 838

Email: gji@nhs.net