

**For Immediate Release**

**BMA Support Your Surgery campaign goes live**

Hard-hitting posters, patient information leaflets and stickers are being sent to GP surgeries today (Friday 16 May 2008) as the BMA's "Support Your Surgery" campaign goes live.

The BMA is providing every GP practice in England with publicity material as part of its campaign to promote and defend NHS general practice.

Family doctors are concerned about government plans for new health centres (polyclinics) and GP practices, many of which may be run by commercial providers on short term contracts. GPs believe this could fragment care for patients and destabilise existing services. Some surgeries may have to reduce services for patients while others could be forced to close.

Dr Laurence Buckman, chairman of the BMA's GP's committee said: "Government plans which will encourage more commercial provision of NHS primary care may put at risk the type of NHS general practice so valued by patients. Family doctors are deeply worried that GP surgeries will go the same way as local branches of banks, post offices and NHS dentists which have disappeared in many parts of the country. We want the Government to support existing practices, to encourage collaboration and service development in the NHS rather than competition, and not to waste valuable NHS resources on unwanted and unnecessary polyclinics."

Practices will also be asking their patients to sign a petition to support NHS general practice that will be presented to the Prime Minister at Downing Street in June.

Ends.

**Notes to Editors:**

You can view the campaign material on the website from 11.00 on Friday 16 May on the new website: <http://www.supportyoursurgery.org.uk>

There are approximately 8700 NHS GP practices in England.