

# PLEASE CONTINUE TO

**SUPPORT  
NHS  
GENERAL  
PRACTICE**

## THE THREAT TO NHS GENERAL PRACTICE HAS NOT GONE AWAY

**A huge thank you to all who showed support for NHS general practice and the 1.3 million people who signed the BMA's Support Your Surgery petition.**

The petition was presented to the Prime Minister in June 2008, and created an impact on both the Government, and the national and local media. However, the threat to NHS general practice has not gone away and more needs to be done to change Government plans.

For more information on how the Government's plans could affect your surgery and how you can make your views count go to: [www.supportyoursurgery.org.uk](http://www.supportyoursurgery.org.uk)

## WHAT IS THE THREAT TO NHS GENERAL PRACTICE?

**The Government plans to introduce large GP-led health centres across England and polyclinics in London, often without proper consultation, instead of funding extra services in local surgeries. These health centres and polyclinics will be very expensive to develop and run, and there is no evidence that they are needed in many areas where good quality GP surgeries already exist.**

Most NHS GP surgeries are independently run by local GPs on behalf of their patients. Many want to expand their services, often working with neighbouring practices, but the Government won't allow the money being spent on new health centres and polyclinics to be used to fund new or better services in existing practices.

Instead the Government is encouraging commercial companies to run the new health centres/polyclinics. There are two main problems with this. The first is that the Government is likely to offer commercial companies only short-term contracts. This would mean that the company running the health centre could change every few years which could lead to a higher turnover of doctors and nurses. This would make it harder for doctors to know you and your long-term health needs and you may lose the types of personal relationships you currently have at your local surgery. This will particularly affect those patients with complex health needs, the elderly, long-term sick and the vulnerable.

The second problem is that commercial companies may normally be accountable to shareholders, not to local patients.

## MAKE YOUR VIEWS COUNT! SUPPORT YOUR SURGERY

Supported by the British Medical Association and the General Practitioners Defence Fund

### What does this mean for you?

The proposals to open these new large health centres and polyclinics could have a damaging effect on your local surgery, putting at risk:

- **The types of services you receive**
- **Continuity of care – you may lose the personal relationship you have with your current GP**
- **Convenience – you may have to travel longer distances to the new health centres and polyclinics**

## YOUR VIEWS ARE IMPORTANT AND CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE – ACT NOW

**If you don't want these changes to NHS general practice, or other changes to health services in your area, then voice your concerns. Contact your local:**

### ■ Member of Parliament

Find out who your local MP is at [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk)  
Write to them via House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

### ■ Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee

NHS organisations have to consult with health Overview and Scrutiny Committees when considering substantial developments or variations to services. Overview and Scrutiny Committees have statutory powers and NHS organisations must consider any recommendations as part of the decision making process. Write to your local health Overview and Scrutiny Committee via your local Council offices. Find out contact details for your local council by visiting [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

### ■ Primary Care Trust (PCT)

Primary Care Trusts organise local NHS services. Your PCT works with local authorities that provide health and social care locally to make sure that your local community healthcare needs are being met. You can find contact details for your local PCT at: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) or ask at your GP surgery reception.

### ■ Newspapers, TV and radio stations

Find out where to contact your local media through either the internet, ringing directory enquiries or check your local paper.

### More information

For more information on getting your voice heard visit our website [www.supportyoursurgery.org.uk](http://www.supportyoursurgery.org.uk)

**BMA** 