

Professor Mike Richards
Head of Review Team
Consequences of Additional Private Drugs for
NHS Care
Room G06A
79 Richmond House
Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS

Executive Office
Box 146
Addenbrooke's Hospital
Hills Road
Cambridge CB2 2QQ

Switchboard: 01223 245151
Direct Dial: 01223-217510
Facsimile: 01223-274480

Email: sandra.harrison@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

2 September 2008

www.addenbrookes.org.uk

Dear Mike

Cambridge University Hospitals has been aware for some years that a proportion of our patients and clinicians consider the current policies relating to patients who choose to pay privately for drugs that are not funded by the NHS to be illogical and unjust. We therefore welcomed your review of this increasingly prominent issue, and decided to administer the national questionnaire provided by your review office to as many patients and clinicians as we could muster in August. The full responses have been submitted to additionaldrugsreview@dh.gsi.gov.uk. However, we consider the findings to be so striking that we wish to bring them to your attention.

I enclose a summary of the questionnaire responses. We had a very large response from patients, with 802 completed questionnaires. Of these the great majority (82%) voted in favour of allowing people to supplement their NHS care by paying for additional drugs not funded by the NHS, 11.1% voted against allowing this, and 6.7% voted 'don't know'.

The view from clinicians was equally clear: 91.1% voted to allow supplementary payments for 'proven' cancer drugs which are unavailable on the NHS, while only 5.4% were opposed to this and 3.6% voted 'don't know'.

It is clear that the great majority of the Trust's patients and clinicians who responded to the questionnaire support top-up payments for drugs being permitted. If this finding is replicated nationally, then there is a clear mandate for a change in policy. This should logically extend beyond drugs to procedures and treatments of proven effectiveness not funded by the NHS.

We look forward to hearing the outcome of your consultation and review.

Yours sincerely

Dr Mary Archer
Chairman

cc Rt. Hon. Alan Johnson MP, Secretary of State for Health
Andrew Lansley MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Health
David Nicholson, Chief Executive of the NHS
Keith Pearson, Chairman, NHS East of England
Maureen Donnelly, Chairman, NHS Cambridgeshire