

30 November 2006

4th Floor,
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
London
SE1 8UG

Gateway 7488

Dear Colleague

Future Development of Cancer Services

I wanted to inform you personally of an exciting announcement that was made today at the Britain Against Cancer conference. The Secretary of State for Health announced that she has asked me to develop a continuing Cancer Reform Strategy.

The new strategy will recognise the new challenges and opportunities facing cancer, such as rising incidence, advances in medical technologies, new drugs and rising expectations amongst the public. It will focus on reform rather than spending commitments - giving patients more choice, strengthening commissioning and making the new NHS levers work for cancer.

It will be about shifting care from inpatients to outpatients and from hospital to community and maximising opportunities for prevention and early diagnosis. It will continue to build on the progress of the Cancer Plan by spreading best practice and recommending what more needs to be done by cancer networks and the NHS to improve clinical outcomes, drive up quality and increase value for money.

The development of this strategy is not something that I can do alone. I need to work with you and all those with an interest in cancer. We will shortly be setting out a process for developing this strategy and I will be in touch with you then.

Finally let me take this opportunity to thank you for all your hard work in changing the cancer landscape and revolutionising the way patients are treated since the Cancer Plan was published in 2000. The Department of Health also yesterday published latest waiting time statistics which show that the 62 target has been achieved.

I look forward to working with you to improve cancer services even further in the future.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Professor Mike Richards

National Cancer Director