



Dear Colleague

END OF LIFE CARE STRATEGY

I am writing to let you know about the progress we are making in developing a strategy for end of life care to meet the health and social care needs and preferences of all adult patients in where they live and die. Many of you have already participated in our extensive written consultation over the summer and by attending the consultation event in October. Your input has been invaluable.

Background

You will recall that Ministers have asked me, with support from Professor Ian Philp and all the other national clinical directors, to develop an end of life care strategy. This will deliver increased choice to all patients regardless of their condition, about where they live and die, and provide them with the support to make this possible. The strategy will be the means whereby the commitments in the manifesto and '*Our health, our care, our say*' are delivered and will set out in more detail the rationale for the new developments heralded in the White Paper.

Next steps

Work on developing the strategy is well in hand and I attach a recent press notice announcing the Advisory Board and working groups. The Advisory Board will provide advice to Ministers on the overall development of the strategy and on how it might best be implemented using the new levers available to the NHS and local councils. The working groups will take forward work to underpin the development of the strategy and will report to the Board.

These working groups include:

Care Pathways and Service Models –

This group will be considering care pathways and service models most likely to meet the health and social care needs and preferences of patients at the end of life.

Commissioning and Levers for Change

The overall task here will be to consider how the various levers within the Healthcare Reform Agenda can best be applied to end of life care.

Analysis and Modelling

This group will provide analytical support to the Board in order to ensure that the strategy makes optimal use of resources, is affordable, and takes full account of available levers and incentives to assist implementation.

Care Homes

Building on the current NHS End of Life Care Programme (2004 – 2007) this group will continue its work in overseeing the care home element of the current programme and make recommendations to the Board on how end of life care given in care homes might best be improved over the coming years.

Measurement of Quality and Outcomes

With the key aims of the strategy in mind, this group will make recommendations on how progress on each should be measured routinely across the whole country and which could be left to local discretion.

Workforce development

The task for this group will be to make recommendations on priorities for workforce development related to end of life care. This should encompass both health and social care professionals and both specialist and generalist health care staff.

We expect the Advisory Board will be reporting to Ministers by the end of 2007.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Mike Richards
Chair of End of Life Care Strategy Advisory Board