

PROPOSED NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT - GP CONTRACTS

I have three main concerns:

(1) Content

It is absolutely crucial that GPs agree to the renegotiated contract on 21 June. If not, Kenneth Clarke will impose the contract in early July. The contract will then continue to interfere with NHS reforms for months to come.

As it stands, the advertisement may enrage GPs and worry patients. Two changes should be made.


- (i) Take out 'different and' in para 1 line 4
- (ii) Replace 'a central' with 'an increasingly significant' in para 3 line 4.

2. Legality

Kenneth Clarke should be asked to ensure that no points have been left out.

3. Government advertising

Does this advertisement satisfy normal guidelines? Robin Butler should be asked to confirm this point.


PP. IAN WHITEHEAD

old version
revised

AN OPEN LETTER TO EVERYONE WHO USES THE FAMILY DOCTOR SERVICE

There has been a great deal of talk about the new contract for Britain's 32,000 GPs that I agreed recently with doctors' leaders. Much of the attention has been on money. But what the contract is really about is developing a different and better family doctor service.

It is essential that you know what the changes will mean for you as a patient.

The new contract will encourage all GPs to develop a wider range of high quality services to attract and retain patients. The promotion of health and the active prevention of disease will become a central part of the service you receive from your doctor.

The main changes you can expect to see are as follows:

- * more regular assessment of the development of young children by their doctor
- * doctors doing even more to protect the public from disease by immunising children and by screening for cervical cancer
- * much more in the way of health promotion clinics and regular health check-ups for all patients
- * night visits being made more often by patients' own doctors or by a doctor they know
- * GPs doing even more to maintain the health of elderly patients and to keep in regular contact with them
- * more minor surgery on the doctor's own premises to save patients having to visit hospital
- * improved services in deprived areas
- * doctors being more available at times convenient to patients

Patient choice will be the all important factor in our efforts to make the family doctor service even better.

GPs will produce practice leaflets and they will be allowed to advertise so you will be fully informed about the services available. And we also intend to make it much easier for you to choose and change your GP.

Of course many GPs already run very good practices. Under the new arrangements they will be better rewarded. Others will be encouraged to develop their services to reflect the needs and preferences of patients.

I believe the new contract will be a vital step in our moves to improve the Health Service. It will help to give patients of all ages an even better quality of care.

Kenneth Clarke