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10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

19 May 1989

Dear Andy,

**PROPOSED NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENTS TO EXPLAIN THE NEW
GP CONTRACT**

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's letter of 15 May and the enclosed draft newspaper advertisement. There was some discussion of this in Cabinet yesterday, and the Prime Minister has now been able to give the matter further thought. She has also had advice from the Cabinet Office on the propriety aspects, which reinforced the doubts expressed by the Chief Secretary in yesterday's Cabinet discussion.

The Prime Minister accepts the advice of the Cabinet Secretary that the proposed advertisement would fall outside the conventions for Government-funded publicity. She is also confirmed in the initial view she gave yesterday that the best way forward would be for your Secretary of State to make the material available to newspaper editors or to provide Ministerial articles to newspapers.

I am copying this letter to David Crawley (Scottish Office), Stephen Williams (Welsh Office), Carys Evans (Chief Secretary's Office) and to Sir Robin Butler.

*Yours,
Paul*
PAUL GRAY

A. McKeon, Esq.,
Department of Health

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Mr Clarke wants to introduce a new spirit of competition within the NHS.

The health of the patient versus the cost of the treatment.

The NHS was created to meet the needs of all patients.

For 40 years it has served the sick without discrimination.

The elderly, the chronically ill and the asthmatic child have all received the treatment they need, be it simple, complex, cheap or expensive.

Now the Government has put this principle at risk.

In Mr Clarke's sharp new health service, making medicine pay could become more important than making people well.

It's not what the NHS should be about, but it's about to happen unless we stop it.

Tell your MP what you think of the White Paper.

It's your Health Service, it's time you had your say.

The NHS. Underfunded. undermined. under threat.

BMA (logo)

If the Government's plans for the NHS go through, how will the patient feel?

Anyone who has sat in a doctor's waiting room will know that our GPs are under pressure.

In hospitals, young doctors are having to work unreasonably long hours.

The NHS is seriously underfunded and short of resources.

Yet strangely, the Government's White Paper does nothing to address this problem.

Instead it comes up with a series of proposals that will make things worse.

For the family doctor there will be even less time for patients.

The Government wants GP practices with over 11,000 patients to take over the budgets for patient care, including the purchase of hospital treatment.

GPs will have to negotiate contracts with hospitals, shop around for the best buys and plan their budgets accordingly.

Tomorrow's doctors will be spending more time with the calculator than the stethoscope.

And they'd better get the sums right.

Since there is no 'new money' in the system, GPs will be expected to take on the burden of rationing the scarce resources.

Every day they will have to juggle the needs of the patient and the cost of the treatment.

A conflict that could seriously damage the doctor/patient relationship.

No wonder every major medical body in the UK has asked the Government to think again. (At the very least to introduce pilot schemes instead of steam-rolling the proposals through.)

So far Mr Clarke and Mrs Thatcher have been deaf to the entreaties of family doctors, nurses, NHS managers and consultants.

Perhaps they'll listen to you.

Let your MP know what you think.

It's your Health Service, it's time you had your say.

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BMA (logo)

A complete list of the medical bodies who support the Government's plans for the NHS.

The Government is trying to push through radical changes to the Health Service without the support of family doctors, nurses, NHS managers or consultants.

Few White Papers have been so universally condemned.

The British Medical Association believes that overall "the proposals will cause serious damage to patient care within the NHS".

The Joint Consultants Committee has protested that the NHS needs "not more businessmen, accountants and computers but more doctors, nurses and operating theatres".

The Institute of Health Service Managers points out that "no attempt has been made to address the endemic underfunding of the NHS".

The list goes on, but still the Government persists with its plans to steam-roller the proposals through. No pilot studies, no consultation.

We'd like them to slow down, to listen.

The NHS can be improved. We want to work with the Government to make it more efficient and even more caring.

So far Mr Clarke hasn't listened to us, but perhaps he'll listen to you. Let your MP know you want the Government to think again.

Sooner or later, Mr Clarke will get the message.

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When you're fifty miles from home, every ward is an isolation ward

If the Government gets its way the local full-service hospital may soon be a thing of the past.

Patients could have to travel long distances for treatment, far away from friends and family.

Being ill will be a lonely business.

The Government is encouraging hospitals to opt out of the control of local health authorities.

They will be free to decide what range of services they offer and how much profit they make.

The pressure to concentrate on profitable patients will be overwhelming, as it is in America.

The elderly, the chronically sick and long-stay patients could find themselves shunted from pillar to post.

In the Government's sharp new health service making medicine pay could become more important than making people well.

No wonder, every major medical body in the UK has expressed their opposition to the White Paper as it stands.

So far, Mr Clarke and Mrs Thatcher have turned a deaf ear; but it's not too late.

Before the White Paper becomes law, let your MP know what you think.

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18-05-1989 16:09

THE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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