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General Secretary:
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Patrons:
Her Majesty the Queen
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth
the Queen Mother
Her Royal Highness
the Princess Margaret
Countess of Snowdon

22 June 1989

Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher FRS, MP
10 Downing Street
London S W 1

Dear Prime Minister,

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 20th June.

Whilst the RCN has never flinched from stating its views to you about inadequacies in health care provision, it has also given to the Government all credit for its practical support for the nursing profession. Thus we have applauded the decisions to set up the Review Body, to introduce clinical grading and to agree to major reforms in nurse education. It is therefore especially disappointing that you feel unable to accept the College's deep disquiet about the membership of the NHS Policy Board and to remain indifferent to its concerns.

Your letter has done nothing to allay our anxieties and the proposed role and function of the Policy Board remains problematic. It seems inconceivable that a body set up to determine "the policy and strategy of the management of the service" does not include someone who is able to speak about the major profession within that service. This would seek to be a "personal contribution" essential to the work of the Board.

Your letter suggests that the Policy Board will have a more restricted remit than perhaps at first envisaged. It is sad that the major policy board for the NHS is not to be concerned with wider issues of health care policy and consider the context in which the NHS is to be developed.

The College has always accepted that the NHS needs to evolve and be alive to developments. We are saddened however that you are not prepared to discuss our concerns.

Yours sincerely,
Trevor Clay

TREVOR CLAY
General Secretary

with P.?