

**PRESS
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GPS' LEADERS ACCEPT KENNETH CLARKE'S ASSURANCES ON DRUG BUDGETS

Kenneth Clarke, Secretary of State for Health, last night met Dr Michael Wilson and other members of the General Medical Services Committee of the BMA.

Afterwards, the following joint statement was issued:

The future arrangements governing general practice prescribing as outlined in the White Paper were discussed. The profession expressed its concern that firm budgets for regional health authorities and for family practitioner committees as proposed in the White Paper "Working for Patients" would operate as a cash limit on patients' medicines.

The Secretary of State explained that this would not be the case and repeated his assurance that the management arrangements proposed by the Government would not infringe in any way the right of a general practitioner to prescribe all those medicines which individual patients might need. The representatives of the profession accepted that assurance.

The representatives of the profession for their part reiterated their continuing commitment to effective prescribing and their willingness to enter into further discussions on how professional review can ensure cost effective and appropriate prescribing.

[END]