

4/3/03

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to update you on a few current issues:

◆ **Funding of ACHCEW**

Several CHCs have asked for advice on their right to make a donation or subscription to ACHCEW and we therefore have included with this letter an opinion prepared by Marion Chester.

Money has been given to ACHCEW by CHCs throughout its history both during the financial year and as an advance payment for services in the next financial year. Apart from custom and practice, the legal rights of CHCs to give money to ACHCEW is described in Marion's opinion. Independence is a paramount principal guiding the work of CHCs and any advice given by the Department or their agents which undermines this principal should be challenged. We will of course provide any support you need in the unlikely event that should this happen.

◆ **Evan Harris MP – Debate on the Regulations: CPPIH and OSC
March 10th 2003**

We were advised by Evan Harris MP, Health Spokesperson for the Liberal Democrats that he had requested a debate on the Regulations governing the work of the CPPIH and the OSCs. I spoke to his office yesterday (3/3/03) and discovered that he has not yet been told the date of the debate (which will be held in Committee). However, I understand from civil servants in the DoH that a date has been set for March 10th and that David Lammy MP expects to be present on that date.

We will provide briefings for on request for MPs who request them, but I would like to suggest that you urgently write to David Lammy and Evan Harris MP with a copy to your local MP and ACHCEW to raise any issues you feel need pressing at this time. It is a very good opportunity. You will already have a copy of our briefings on the CPPIH and OSC and in addition you may wish to consult the House of Lords Hansard February 13th 2003 (Vol 644, No 454, columns 884-902).

Stop Press: confirmation has just arrived that the debate will take place in Committee on 4.30pm on March 10th 2003.

◆ **Patient's Forums – Access to GP surgeries**

I have made enquiries from the BMA and DoH about the right of Patients' Forums to inspect GP surgeries. I understand that this matter is still under consideration!

Best wishes

Malcolm Alexander
Director