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6 January 2012.

Rt. Hon David Cameron
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1 2AA

Dear Mr Cameron,

Health and social care bill undermines integration.

I would like to draw your attention to today's letter in the Guardian from Dr Hamish Meldrum, the Chairman of Council of the BMA. The letter is copied below. Dr Meldrum fully supports your drive to integrate health and social care as recommended in the recent King's Fund report. However the primary theme of the original health and social care bill was to promote provider competition which is largely the antithesis of integration. Hence Dr Meldrum and many, many others have called for the bill to be dropped and this is why I am writing to you.

Letter in the Guardian on 6 January 2012:

Health and social care bill undermines integration.

You report (5 January) that the prime minister has ordered the health secretary, Andrew Lansley, to drive through policies that will help to integrate health and social care. In principle we agree, but that laudable objective will be completely undermined by the government's insistence on pushing forward with its fundamentally flawed health and social care bill. The bill will result in widespread fragmentation of healthcare and work against integration with social care, not to mention the massive cost and destabilisation caused by yet another major reorganisation at a time of huge financial pressures. BMA-commissioned research showed that nine in 10 doctors thought that increasing competition in the NHS in England would fragment the health service further.

The first step towards the sensible integration of health and social care must be to drop this unwanted and unnecessary legislation and to work constructively with clinicians, patients and the public to develop national and local policies that will lead to effective integration of care on an evolving basis, without the need for yet another costly and destructive top-down reorganisation.

Dr Hamish Meldrum
Chairman of council, British Medical Association

Thank you for giving Dr Meldrum's letter your attention.

Yours sincerely

Dr Morris Bernadt.