



The Scottish
Parliament

Patricia Ferguson MSP
for Glasgow Maryhill

1 May 2001

Mr P Quadros
9 Station Road
Strathaven
ML10 6BT

Dear Mr Quadros

After our meeting I sent your helpful report to the Minister for Health. I have now had a reply from the Deputy Minister which I have enclosed, in full, for your attention.

I hope you find it interesting.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Ferguson MSP



27 APR 2001

Deputy Minister for Health & Community Care
Malcolm Chisholm MSP

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20 April 2001

Dear Patricia

Thank you for your letter to Susan Deacon of 30 March 2001 on behalf of your constituent Mr Paola Quadros, 9 Station Road, Glasgow, enclosing a copy of his paper on the integration of complementary and alternative medicine into the NHS.

I can assure you that the Executive does recognise that complementary or alternative medicine (CAM) may offer relief to some people suffering from a wide variety of conditions. There is no legislative barrier to prevent practitioners of CAM from offering their services, subject only to some general restrictions such as those on prescribing and supplying medicines and giving injections. Members of the public are free to use these services privately if they choose, and **a GP or hospital clinician may refer a patient for CAM treatment.** The GP or hospital clinician **would require to be satisfied of the** value of the treatment and the **competence of the practitioner,** and would **remain responsible for the patient's medical care.** If a Health Board sees a need for the provision of a particular type of therapy in its area it is open to that Board to provide that therapy. For example, as you will know, there is an NHS Homeopathic Hospital in Glasgow.

Many forms of CAM, such as acupuncture, homeopathy, chiropractic and osteopathy, are already available as NHS treatment. The National Medical Advisory Committee of the Scottish Office Department of Health (now the Scottish Executive Health Department) produced in November 1996 a report on the current activity levels in these four disciplines which included guidelines for Health Boards on making purchasing arrangements for their provision. **These guidelines, as the report made clear, might be applied to other forms of CAM.** They do not however require Boards to purchase particular therapies, which is a matter for the Boards based on their assessment of need in their areas.

The Science and Technology Committee of the House of Lords and its Sub-Committee I, chaired by Lord Walton of Detchant, has recently produced a report on *Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, addressing in particular the issues of education, training and regulation, and of provision within the NHS in addition to the private sector. On the question of NHS provision the report did not recommend any material change in the position outlined above, that referral for CAM on the NHS should be a matter for clinical judgement. The report recognised the need for NHS clinicians to be more informed about CAM, and recommended that the Royal Colleges and other professional training organisations take this forward. The Department of Health is developing an information feature on CAM to be included on NHS Direct Online, which will of course be available to all Internet users, and in due course the Executive will consider a similar feature for the online NHS 24, the Scottish equivalent to NHS Direct Online.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely,
Malcolm

MALCOLM CHISHOLM