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National Association of LINKs Members

Andrew Lansley
Secretary of State for Health
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS

June 26th 2012

Dear Mr Lansley,

Revalidation of Doctors

We have been actively involved with the GMC, National Voices and other bodies, in development of the revalidation process for doctors, especially in relation to patient involvement in doctor's appraisals. We would now like to make a number of comments about the progress that has been achieved and our aspirations for the next stage of the process.

NALM believes that the revalidation of doctors will ensure that their skills are up to date, and that they are fit to practise. We recognise the valuable contribution that revalidation will make to the quality and safety of care that patients receive and value the additional assurances that this process will provide to patients. All patients want doctors to regularly go through a process that ensures they are practising safely and are up to date with their medical knowledge.

We welcome the commitment of the GMC to making patient's views and comments an integral element of revalidation. This approach will provide doctors with material they can use to improve their practise and enable them to follow the lead of the many doctors already collecting feedback from patients for their annual appraisals. We hope all doctors will embrace this opportunity.

We recognise the GMC's responsibility as a regulator to support the development of a highly effective and trusted medical profession and believe that the development of effective patient input into revalidation is central to this aspiration. Equally, we

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understand the challenges and pressures faced by the profession and employers in preparing for revalidation.

We welcome the GMC's commitment to review revalidation once it has been introduced and we will work actively with the GMC to ensure that the patient perspective is included meaningfully in the development of future revalidation policy. We hope you will confirm in the autumn that revalidation will go ahead, based on the progress already made towards strengthening local systems of appraisal and clinical governance.

We also ask you to support the further development of revalidation, in a way that enables patients to identify outcomes, which demonstrate improvements to the effectiveness of medical practice. This approach will fit well with local quality improvement initiatives, which Healthwatch, CCGs and local offices of the NHS Commissioning Board will actively lead and engage with.

We would particularly value your support for pilots across the UK between doctors, patients' groups, LINKs/Healthwatch, and other statutory patient organisations, to develop local approaches to patient involvement in revalidation, which include the production of outcome data that will assure all patients that revalidation is an effective and meaningful process, leading to safer and more effective medical care.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Alexander
Chair

Ruth Marsden
Vice Chair

And on behalf of national NALM Steering Group:

John Martin, East Midlands
Barry Fippard, East Midland
Mary Ledgard, Eastern
Sally Brearley, London
Jack Firth, North West
Len Roberts, South East/Central
Anita Higham, South East/Central
John Langlely, South West
Elli Pang, South West
Dag Saunders, West Midlands
Rob Rijckborst, West Midlands
Mike Smith, Yorkshire and Humberside