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PRESS RELEASE

AMICUS WELCOMES MPs REPORT ON NHS SHAKE-UP

Call for NHS Chief Executive, Sir Nigel Crisp 'to end the confusion'

Stinging criticism of the government's proposals for NHS reform of primary care by the Commons Health Select Committee has been welcomed by Amicus, which has 100,000 members working in the health sector.

The Amicus Head of Health, Gail Cartmail said: 'We, like the committee, are appalled at the continuing lack of clarity about whether primary care trusts will eventually divest themselves of their provider functions.'

She called for NHS Chief Executive, Sir Nigel Crisp to end the confusion about the proposals – which Amicus, and the committee, argue will lead to fragmented services, creeping privatisation, job losses and poorer patient care.

'We welcome the select committee's report which vindicates the campaign that Amicus has been waging to reverse these ill-conceived plans. There must now be a clear statement from the Department of Health explaining that proposals that would fragment service delivery in the community were wrong minded.'

The Select Committee branded plans to reorganise primary care trusts, which control 80% of the NHS budget, as 'ill judged in the extreme'. The MPs said: 'The cycle of perpetual change is not conducive to the successful provision and improvement of health services.'

Gail Cartmail said: 'Our members at the chalk face are grappling with job cuts and freezes on filling posts, plus reduced trainee places – and this does not fit in with the health policies the government says it wants to deliver and that we support.'

'Amicus welcomes the government's investment in the NHS and pledges to improve services in the community, but we cannot agree that creeping privatisation or fragmentation of service delivery are in the interests of client/patient care.'

Gail Cartmail said that Amicus will campaign for a White Paper – due at the end of January - that supports high quality services in the community, addresses health inequalities and recognises the skills and dedication of NHS health professionals.

- The Health Select Committee report comes a day after Amicus members staged a successful lobby of MPs at Westminster to reiterate their opposition to the break-up of the NHS.

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Amicus/CPHVA press releases can be seen on the CPHVA website: www.amicus-cphva.org

Amicus Health has about 100,000 professional and skilled members working in the health sector. Its professional sections include the Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Association, the Mental Health Nurses' Association, the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists, the Society of Sexual Health Advisers, and the Medical Practitioners' Union.