

6 November, 2007

**PRESS RELEASE**

### **MINISTERS WARNED NOT TO MEDDLE IN NHS PAY PROCEEDINGS**

Ministers should not attempt to hi-jack NHS pay negotiations by proposing a below-inflation clampdown for 2008 before the independent Pay Review Body (PRB) has started considering the evidence.

Unite, the third largest union in the NHS, is angry that the government has proposed in its evidence to the PRB that there should be only two per cent increase for nurses, midwives and therapists; 1.5 per cent for dentists and hospital doctors; and a pay freeze for GPs.

Unite is concerned that there will be repetition of last year's pay negotiations when the PRB recommended a 2.5 per cent increase, but ministers imposed a staged increase worth 1.9 per cent annually – even though NHS staff in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland received the full award.

In the joint staff side evidence, Unite, along with other unions and professional organisations, called for a pay award 'significantly above' the current rate of inflation of 3.9 per cent, as measured by the Retail Price Index.

Unite Head of Health, Kevin Coyne said: 'We want to avoid the situation where ministers indicate what they will award before the PRB started its deliberations in earnest.'

'What is the point of having an independent PRB, if ministers ultimately reject its findings, as they did this year? We are confident that the PRB will make its recommendations independently based on the merits of the evidence, and not by pre-emptive ministerial dictat. We call on ministers to honour the PRB findings when they are announced by March next year.'

In addition to supporting the joint staff side evidence, Unite has called for a reduction in the working week for NHS staff to 35 hours, and that health professionals' registration fees should be paid by the employer.

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## NOTES TO NEWS EDITORS:

For further information, please ring:

Kevin Coyne, Unite Head of Health

☎ 07870 863 126 (Blackberry)

☎ 07798 531 006 (mobile)

Barrie Brown, Unite Lead Officer for Nursing

☎ 07798 531 022

Shaun Noble                      Communications Officer

☎ 020 7780 4080 (direct line)

☎ 07768 693 940 (mobile)

Unite/CPHVA press releases can be seen on the CPHVA website: [www.amicus-cphva.org](http://www.amicus-cphva.org)

**Unite (Amicus section) is the third largest union in the NHS. It has seven professional sections: the Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Association, the Mental Health Nurses Association, the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists, the Society of Sexual Health Advisers, the Medical Practitioners' Union, College of Healthcare Chaplains, and the Hospital Physicists Association.**

*Unite was formed by an amalgamation of Amicus and the Transport and General Workers' Union in May 2007.*