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Rt Hon. Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Health
Richmond House
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February 7, 2013

Dear Mr Hunt

I am a GP in a small group practice in Ripley, Derbyshire. I am writing to express serious concerns about the pending GP contract imposition.

With the proposed increase in QOF thresholds to unethically high levels and the complete loss of organisational indicators, to be diverted towards unworkable DESs with little clinical evidence base, you would now have us working significantly harder with no consequent additional investment. My colleagues and I already routinely work 12 hour days. Our staff are at breaking point meeting the current workload.

Striving to meet such unrealistic targets will be clinically dangerous and will reduce overall patient access, which we have tried very hard to maintain, and further devolve general practice into tick-box and protocol-driven medicine. The very nature of our work has been its strength over the years and is what patients value about general practice; that of forming long-term relationships and the provision of holistic care to patients and their families. Your proposed changes put all this at risk, to the detriment of our patients.

I do realise that savings must be made in the current climate, but traditional general practice is already the most efficient and effective part of the NHS by far. As GPs we are struggling to cope with the additional pressures from revalidation, CCG implementation, meeting CQC registration and tackling insatiable demand and unrealistic expectations against a background of reduced clinical freedoms and an increasingly litigious society. Your proposed changes will substantially worsen an already delicate situation as we try to maintain high quality patient care.

I had sincerely hoped that the change in government would have seen a reversal of the blatant disinvestment in general practice ever since the new contract of 2004, and a realisation that a valued general practice is the vital cornerstone of the NHS, however it is clear that this is not the case. We can already see the effects of this damage to general practice – recruitment is exceedingly difficult and experienced GPs are leaving practice - your lack of genuine concern for the welfare of primary care will no doubt result in a substantially poorer service for patients and I would therefore strongly urge your government to reconsider its position.

Yours sincerely

Dr Michael Wong