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Nurse's group welcomes Gordon Brown's abolition of NHS: More than 25 million people already go private

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Contact: Helen Evans 07739 390087 Email: helen@nursesforreform.com

Nurses for Reform (NFR), the free market nurse think tank, welcomes Gordon Brown's announcement (expected Wednesday) that NHS patients will be allowed to privately top-up for their medicines. NFR Director, Dr. Helen Evans RGN, said:

"The NHS is now over and NFR welcomes this. First, supply was reformed with the use of the high quality and more efficient independent sector. Now politicians are turning to the demand-side: funding. Health Secretary Johnson was right to say that co-payments breach the basis of the NHS. Today, he and Brown are consigning the NHS to the dustbin of history."

Private sector floodgates already open

NFR has long argued that the NHS is an essentially Stalinist, nationalised abhorrence and that Britain can do much better without its so called 'principles'. NFR has also consistently argued that the inexorable rise of people going private for their healthcare makes today's announcement understandable to voters.

More than 25 million already go private

While in 1948 the NHS promised "all medical, dental and nursing care", Dr. Evans says that "in 2008, 25 million Britons already go private":

"As the NHS hits 60, politicians are increasingly mindful that 7 million people have private medical insurance; 6 million have private health cash plans; 8

million people pay privately for complementary treatments, more than 250,000 privately self-fund each year for private acute surgery and many millions more pay privately towards long-term care. This is not to mention a whole raft of other services such as NHS dentistry that are crumbling before our eyes. In 2008, at least 25 million people are now paying privately for things that the NHS once said it would cover. Adding medicines to this simply means that the government is facing up to reality.”

Dr. Evans concludes:

“Brown and the next government still need to go much further. All state hospitals and health and social care institutions should be returned to the independent sector. The next government should end health censorship and allow advertising at all levels. In today’s internet age it is absurd that advertising by doctors, hospitals and pharmaceutical companies are subject to various forms of ban. While no one can ever claim to have perfect knowledge, only better informed consumers will encourage competitive and trusted brands. Finally, the General Medical Council and the Nursing and Midwifery Council should lose their monopoly status in law. Training, regulation, pay and the supply of all medical and health labour should be opened up to the market so as to empower consumers and encourage choice.”

- End -

Editor’s Notes: Nurses for Reform (NFR) is a growing pan-European network of nurses dedicated to consumer-oriented reform of European healthcare systems. In Britain it already has more than 100 subscribers. Its director, Helen Evans, is a senior nurse with nearly twenty years experience in the National Health Service. Over the years her career has seen her work in some of Britain’s leading hospitals including Senior Infection Control Nurse, Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust; Infection Control Nurse, the Royal London Hospitals NHS Trust; Operating Theatre Sister, St. Bartholomew’s Hospital. Helen trained at Whipps Cross Hospital in London’s East End and holds a degree in Health Management from Anglia Ruskin University. A Ph.D student in the final stages of her thesis in Health Economics at Brunel University she has also been a guest lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University.