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THE BUCKLEBURY PRACTICE

Chapel Row Surgery

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17th June 2008

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Future of the Dispensary at Chapel Row

Dear Patient

As many of you will already be aware, the Government published a White Paper in April 2008 with the aim of revising the position of Pharmacy in the modern NHS. One part of the White Paper (Section 8) suggests a revision of the regulations that allow Practices such as ours to operate a Dispensary for our patients. The proposed changes would have a dramatic effect on Dispensaries at rural Surgeries, and if the changes were to go into Law, would probably involve the closures of 80% of rural Dispensaries in the UK.

We are now led to believe that the White Paper will be re-published in July along with the Government's report on Primary Care currently being written by Lord Darzi. There will then be a three month consultation period during which time the population will have the opportunity to feed back to the Government on the proposed changes. We hope that the Sections on revising the "control of entry" for Pharmacies and Dispensing Doctors will be removed, which would mean that the Chapel Row Dispensary will remain protected by the Regulations.

If however the clause remains in place, it is inevitable that the Dispensaries in local towns such as Theale and Pangbourne will be forced to close with effect from April 2009. The situation is slightly more complicated at Chapel Row because we are more rural. It is possible that a Pharmacy would move into a nearby area, and if this were to occur, the Dispensary would also be forced to close in April 2009. All Chapel Row patients would be then obliged to go to a local pharmacy, wherever it might be located, and there would be no dispensing at Chapel Row Surgery.

We feel that losing our dispensary would be detrimental to the services that we presently provide to our Patients. We believe that the current system provides a one stop high quality service which is safe and efficient and we know is hugely appreciated by our patients. This could be replaced by a two stop service with no guarantee of quality which would potentially be inconvenient for patients and damaging to the environment. We do not know why the Government would want to terminate the current Dispensary service.

We would like to encourage patients who haven't already done so, to write to our local MP, Richard Benyon at the Houses of Parliament, to Dawn Primerolo, the Minister of Health and Pharmacy, and to Maureen McCartney, the Director of Primary Care, Berkshire West PCT, 57-59 Bath Road, Reading RG30 2BA. If necessary we intend to commence a petition in July to save the Dispensary, and we are using every avenue to inform the politicians of our views.

We will endeavour to keep you informed via your Patient Participation Group, and via the Chapel Row website at www.crsurgery.co.uk.

**Dr P D Westcar
On behalf of Chapel Row Surgery**