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NHS MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVE

Department of Health

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From the Chief Executive

D.K. Nichol, C.B.E.

Regional Chairmen and General Managers
District Chairmen and General Managers
General Managers of Post Graduate
Special Health Authorities
FPC Chairmen and General Managers

EL(89)MB/179

17 October 1989

See Concept

NHS COMMUNICATIONS

1. In EL(89)MB102 which gave details of the role and constitution of the Management Executive, I stated my intention to improve communications between the Centre and the service. I also referred to the work which Tony Kember as Communications Adviser was undertaking to help establish closer links with General Managers. I write now to give you further details of what we are doing to introduce positive changes.
2. I have appointed consultants to evaluate the effectiveness of current communications processes based on best practice but also to make recommendations for improvements where necessary. The objective is to prepare a communications strategy and implementation programme aimed at helping you with the task of keeping the one million staff employed in the service better informed about major policy developments including "Working for patients" and the White Papers on Community Care and Primary Care.
3. The work involves 3 firms of Consultants. Stephen Taylor of Kinsley Lord will lead a Consortium which will include

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Burson-Marsteller and Commercial Presentations. Tony Kember will represent the Management Executive and the lead RGM to facilitate the NHS Management input will be Brian Edwards of Trent RHA. Regional Chairmen will be kept closely in touch with developments.

4. A high priority for the Management Executive is to improve our understanding of communications as a two way process and to obtain from all managers - but particularly at local level - a positive sense of ownership of communications responsibilities. We need to do more than pass information and clear messages from the Centre. Effective communications means informing, involving and motivating our staff.
5. We shall only succeed through the commitment of Chairmen and Managers and I ask for your full co-operation. The objective is to create a better climate of understanding to help managers and their staff meet the major changes facing the NHS in the coming months, and establish the better teamwork necessary to improve patient care.
6. I shall keep you informed of progress through Regional General Managers.

Lynda Lincoln

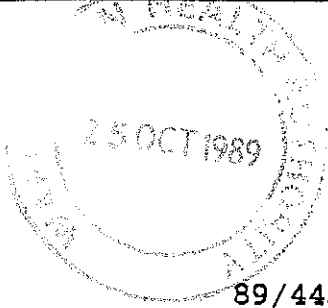
Duncan Nichol

Duncan Nichol

This communication will be reviewed on 31 October 1990.

PRESS RELEASE

Richmond House
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NEW DRIVE TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH ONE MILLION NHS STAFF

A new initiative to improve communications with one million staff in the NHS has been approved by the NHS Chief Executive, Duncan Nichol.

As a first step, he has appointed consultants to carry out a six week evaluation into the shortcomings of current processes and practices and to make recommendations. This will be used to develop a communications strategy and implementation programme aimed at helping general managers and chairmen keep staff better informed about major changes in the service arising from developments such as the NHS Review and the forthcoming Community Care White Paper. Cost of the work is about £160,000.

Mr Nichol said: " I want to introduce positive improvements so that staff in all our hospitals, community units, doctors' surgeries, and other parts of the service are fully aware of the major changes taking place. I want our staff fully to understand the impact that changes will have on patients, the care they provide and on them as valued employees.

" The cost of this exercise is well worthwhile. Of course, we need to do more than pass clear messages from the centre to our staff. Effective communications means informing professional staff, and influencing the way that they think about the issues which matter to them at work.

The study and implementation of the recommendations will be carried out by a consortium comprising management consultants Kinsley Lord, internal communications specialists Burston-Marsteller and Commercial Presentations.

[MORE]

Brian Edwards, the regional general manager from Trent and Tony Kember, communications adviser with the NHS Management Executive will work closely with general managers and chairmen in the service to ensure the proposals are practical and will command the support of the service.

Mr Nichol said: " Improving our understanding of communications as a two-way process and obtaining from all managers, particularly at local level, a positive sense of ownership of responsibility for communications is a high priority for the NHS Management Executive, and for everyone who cares about improving the delivery of health services. Only through improved communications can we stimulate a better understanding among our staff - who are our most valuable resource - of our objectives, and our priorities.

" The initiative will need the support of chairmen and managers at all levels. The key objective is to establish a better climate of understanding to help managers and their staff understand the changes taking place in the service, and to help them implement improvements in the interest of patients," said Mr Nichol.

[END]

See also : Circular EL (89) MB/179