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Mr P Quadros  
9 Station Road  
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5 August 1998

Dear Mr Quadros,

Thank you for your letter to Tony Blair dated 28 May 1998 about the setting up of an agency for complementary medicine. As this section deals with complementary medicine your letter has been passed to me to reply and I am sorry for the delay in doing so.

You may be interested to know that an independent discussion paper on complementary medicine entitled "Integrated Healthcare - A Way Forward for the Next Five Years?" was published by a charity called the Foundation for Integrated Medicine in October last year. This charity was set up by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales who has an interest in complementary medicine. This paper makes a number of proposals for the better integration of complementary and conventional forms of medicine. Health Ministers have welcomed this report as a useful contribution to the debate about the role of complementary therapy. The Secretary of State for Health addressed a follow up conference on 28 May 1998 where many of the issues raised in the paper were discussed. I have enclosed a copy of his speech for your information.

You may find it useful to share your ideas with the Foundation. Their address is:  
Foundation for Integrated Medicine, 7th Floor, Windsor House, 83 Kingsway, London WC2B 6SD.

In the meantime Mr Blair has asked me to thank you for taking the time to write with your interesting proposals.

Yours sincerely,

Lee Rope  
Policy Assistant

**Press release**

98/208

Thursday 28th May 1998

FRANK DOBSON ANNOUNCES FUNDING TO HELP DEVELOP  
COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINEHealth Secretary says that professional self-regulation is the only way forward

Further funding to help the professional organisation of complementary and alternative medicine in the UK was announced today by Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health.

He said that the Department of Health had earmarked a further £25,000 for follow-up work on a survey of professional and regulatory activity among representatives of the disciplines of complementary and alternative treatment.

This is in addition to the £25,000 provided by the Department towards the cost of the survey itself, which was undertaken by the Centre for Complementary Health Studies at the University of Exeter, and published last October.

Mr Dobson was giving the keynote speech at a London conference on *'Integrated Healthcare: A Way Forward for the Next Five Years'*. The conference was opened by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales.

The Secretary of State said: "I believe that what works is what counts and what counts is what works. With so many threats to our health we can't afford to ignore anything that works and is safe.

"What is very clear is that orthodox medicine has worked wonders. New technology and new pharmaceutical products have made it possible to treat ailments which could not be treated in the past and to cure conditions which once were fatal. We may well be on the brink of huge breakthroughs which will save the lives of millions and transform the lives of tens of millions. I welcome that prospect and want to promote it.

"But it's equally clear that some people with some conditions do not respond to even the most modern orthodox treatment. It's also clear that some of these people can be and are being helped by forms of complementary and alternative medicine. This fact is reflected in the survey by Sheffield University which showed that 40 per cent of GP practices in England were providing patients with access to complementary therapists."

[MORE]

Mr Dobson said: "As Secretary of State for Health it's my job to try to see that treatment offered to people in this country is both safe and effective. In parallel with the medical, nursing, midwifery and other professions, we are trying to raise clinical standards by promoting evidence based medicine.

"More and more rigorous standards are being applied both to therapeutic practices and to the practitioners themselves. That's only right and proper. The same rigorous standards must be applied right across the board. And effective complementary and alternative therapies have nothing to fear from that.

"People want treatment which is dependable whoever is providing it. They want to be sure that treatment is evidence based, that it works and that its safe. They also want to be able to have confidence in the professional skill and integrity of the practitioners of any therapy, orthodox or complementary."

### **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

1. The full text of Mr Dobson's speech is available to the press (if not attached to this Press Notice) from the Department of Health Press Office, Tel: 0171-210-5221.
2. The report from the University of Exeter on integrated healthcare was published on 21st October last year (Press Notice 97/292), and welcomed by Tessa Jowell, Minister for Public Health, and Baroness Margaret Jay, Minister for Health (Lords).
3. The survey '*Professional Organisation of Complementary and Alternative Medicine in the UK*', published last October, identified 143 registering bodies covering 14 major complementary and alternative medicine disciplines, and several smaller, emerging practices.

[ENDS]