

11 02 09 Question re CNHC

**Q** - In October of 2010, the Department of Health (in England) published a bulletin which went out to GPs encouraging them to recommend Complementary and Natural Health Council(CNHC)-registered practitioners to patients looking for complementary health care.

In 2010, the CNHC was also asked by The Secretary of State for Health to register practitioners supplying herbal medicines to members of the public in England.

As the CNHC is a Government-sponsored, voluntary registration body for complementary health care practitioners, is the Scottish Government also supporting the provision of complementary and alternative medicine through CNHC-registered therapists or does the Health Minister support an independent Scottish CAM regulatory body, which takes into consideration the differences between the English and Scottish health systems?

**A** - As you know, the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC) is a non-statutory body, currently funded and monitored by the Department of Health. Practitioner registration with the CNHC is voluntary. There is no Scottish Government representative to the CNHC and no endorsement or funding from the Scottish Government has been sought or given. At present there is no intention to create an independent Scottish CAM regulatory body.

You may be aware that the four UK health departments have recently agreed that the Health Professions Council (HPC) will hold a statutory register of suppliers of unlicensed herbal medicines. The HPC were chosen for this role as they are an established and experienced regulatory body who have the processes and procedures in place to be able to successfully establish and maintain a statutory register.

The Scottish Government recognises that complementary or alternative medicine (CAM) therapies may offer relief to some people suffering from a wide variety of conditions, and it is open to NHS Boards in Scotland to make such services available based on an assessment of needs within their respective areas. Decisions regarding the care of individual patients are a matter of professional judgement for the clinician responsible for the patient's care.