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Ronnie Fraser Esq.
Scottish Executive Health Dept.
St Andrews House
Regent Road
Edinburgh

20/2/03

Dear Mr Fraser,

The OFT Report into the Control of Entry regulations pertaining to NHS community Pharmacy.

I am writing with regard to the above report, which concerns itself primarily about the prices of medicines rather than addressing the crucial issue of NHS services. The average Pharmacy has in the region of 10% of its turnover made up from medicine sales, but these need careful supervision by a qualified Pharmacist and suitably trained support staff. The report makes sweeping claims of the benefits to consumers of supermarkets opening pharmacies and savings on medicine prices being made. The crucial issue for PATIENTS rather than consumers is EASY ACCESS to a Local Pharmacy service and the report ignores the issue of NHS services, which is the crucial issue here.

The current system works because we have a stable network of Pharmacies here in Scotland and I know that the Scottish Consumer report shows that there is a high degree of satisfaction from patients and consumers alike. The National Appeal panel which decides on Contract applications works well, I have been a member for several years and the committee is fully aware of issues before awarding new contracts AND ONLY DOES SO IF THERE IS PATIENT BENEFIT. The current system is based

on health care need not on commercial considerations and should continue to do so.

If the OFT report was to be accepted there would be some closures in the secondary shopping areas where the need is greatest. The people who don't drive, cannot drive due to their medical condition, families on low income and the elderly are all the heavy users of the local Pharmacy and they would be much disadvantaged by the OFT reports acceptance.

The local neighbourhood will suffer more loss as the recent report "Ghost town Britain " clearly shows.

Lastly, the SEHD has done much good work in partnership with the existing stable network to bring the Scottish Pharmacy Plan to the fore, it will improve the delivery of services in the future but we need a stable Pharmacy network not shifting sands to deliver the vision for Scotland's patients. I urge the Scottish Executive to keep control of entry so be we can build the future for Pharmacy with the patient at the centre of our thinking. The OFT report should be rejected for all the above reasons.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "George Romanes". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the "Yours sincerely" text.

George Romanes