

The NHS Directory of Complementary and Alternative Practitioners

Member's Newsletter

Welcome to the Latest member's Newsletter. The NHSTA wishes all our members a Happy New Year.

The Association is delighted to announce that it **is giving all NHS Directory members a Christmas present worth £295.**

In January next year, all NHS Directory members will be given a **free listing** in a brand new CAM website open to public access. This new website is going to be known as *complementaryalternatives.com*. It will be launched at the end of January next year, boasting the biggest single database of complementary and alternative practitioners currently available to the general public in the United Kingdom.

The NHSTA has obtained the agreement of the publishers of *complementaryalternatives.com* **to include all NHS Directory members** on the new site **free of charge** until further notice.

It is anticipated that it will be one of the most important and comprehensive new websites for CAM practitioners to date.

complementaryalternatives.com will also include information on how members of the public can access complementary therapy via the NHS and include articles, case studies and information on different complementary therapies.

You do not have to take any action to be included. Your listing will show your name, address, phone number, e-mail address and website address, if applicable, listed under the therapy you practise. More information is available on the NHSTA website www.nhsta.org.uk.

Important note:

Please only contact us if you DO NOT wish to be listed free in the new *complementaryandalternatives.co.uk* website. NHSTA is pleased to offer this valuable new benefit, worth £295, free to all our members. Please note that The magazine 'Complementary Alternatives' referred to in our last Newsletter will now be incorporated into this new website.

NHSTA makes major breakthrough in the battle to get cam on the NHS

New alternative provider contract announced (APMS)

Following lobbying by the NHSTA and other organisations on 25 March 2004, the Minister for Health, Melanie Johnson, announced in a Commons reply (see website), the establishment of a new mechanism, which is aimed at making it easier for CAM to be prescribed on the NHS. This mechanism is known as the Alternative Provider Medical Services or APMS route. Based on what the DoH have told us, it seems that NHS doctors wishing to employ CAM practitioners now have a simpler and clearer way of doing so. The NHSTA is currently working with our legal department to draft a suitable contract utilising the APMS route.

About our status

The Association is sometimes asked about its status and relationship with the Department of Health and the NHS. The NHSTA is an NHS 'Stakeholder'

About our personnel

The Chairman is Dr Prasad Rao. Dr Rao is Executive Clinical Chair of South Stoke Primary Care Trust and a practising GP.

The Chief Executive is Dr David Tod OBE FRCGP. Dr Tod was a practising NHS GP in South West London for over 30 years, and has been an advisor to several Health Ministers and Secretaries of State. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine and the Royal College of General Practitioners. During his time in general practice, Dr Tod retained the services of a complementary practitioner to treat his patients via the NHS.

The Secretary is Mr David Selwyn. Mr Selwyn is a member of the Royal Society of Medicine, the British Psychological Society and the Medical Journalists Association. He has worked in medical publishing and research for over 25 years. He is a published medical researcher (in the field of Autism), a Board Member of Wandsworth Primary Care Trust's Clinical Governance Committee and sits on the "Capacity, Plurality and Choice" Working Party at the Department of Health, where he helped draw up a new code of good practice for PCTs.

All officers of the Association provide their time free of charge.

Background of the NHSTA

Further information on the background and history of how the organisation was formed and its relationship with the Department of Health and the NHS is available in the Update section of our website www.nhsta.org.uk, But briefly:

The NHSTA was launched in April 2000 in Westminster to support the new Primary Care Groups and Trusts. Broadly speaking, it is similar to the NHS Confederation, NHS Primary Care Alliance, the BMA and the Royal Colleges.

As an NHS stakeholding organisation, it works closely with the Department of Health and sits on Joint Working Parties at the DoH, one of which is "Capacity, Plurality and Choice", for which the NHSTA helped draw up the Code of Practice for Primary Care Trusts, commissioning healthcare from hospitals in Europe and bringing in overseas doctors to work in the UK.

The NHSTA consulted with the Department of Health prior to launching the NHS Directory of Complementary and Alternative Practitioners and continues to meet with and consult the DoH regarding the Directory.

The Association meets regularly with the Chief Medical Officer for England and Health Ministers from government and HM opposition. It lobbies on behalf of its Primary Care Trust members on a broad number of issues and, through its publications, helps to support the work of the Department of Health in such areas as the "Choosing Health?" Initiative, the National Service Frameworks (NSF) for Coronary Heart Disease and Diabetes. Recently, it published, in collaboration with Dr Roger Boyle (the heart "tsar"), two support publications for the NSF on Coronary Heart Disease and Diabetes, as well as a publication on Primary Care in the NHS.

The Association has a distinguished editorial board which includes Dr David Colin-Thome, Head of Primary Care for the National Health Service.

The Association's membership comprises Primary Care Trusts and CAM members. These 300 new Trusts are responsible for nearly 80% of the £60 billion pounds annual NHS budget, including funding of complementary therapies.

Genesis of the Directory

The NHSTA is also sometimes asked how the directory came into being, and what is its underlying philosophy

In 2000 the House of Lords published the findings of its Scientific & Technical Committees 6th report on Complementary and Alternative Medicines (CAM). The NHSTA studied their Lordships deliberations and the Governments broadly positive response.

Two key findings were that organisations that were not solely CAM based should also play a role in helping regulate and participate in how CAM is made

available in the UK. In particular the Government has pointed out that the best way for CAM to be made widely available in the UK was via the Primary Care route i.e. the GP.

The Chief Executive of the NHSTA, Dr David Tod O.B.E., was himself a pioneer in this field. Apart from acting as a consultant to a Herbal Medicine company, he employed, in his NHS practice, a qualified Chinese Acupuncturist.

Accordingly the NHSTA made a decision to take the initiative signalled by the House of Lords and the Government, creating a means by which CAM Practitioners could access the NHS, thereby enabling NHS patients to access CAM.

The directory continues to make excellent progress, membership now stands at nearly 5000 and new members continue to join at an average rate of over 100 a week. The Directory is recognised by the Royal Society of Medicine in their publication 'Health Information on the Internet' (HIOTI) as a 'leading medical website'.

How is the Directory publicised?

The NHS Directory of Complementary and Alternative Practitioners was launched with a direct mail campaign to over 10,000 G.P. practices supported by an eighteen month advertising campaign in professional journals including Primary Care in the New NHS, published by the NHSTA, the official NHS Magazine and appropriate search engines.

Another direct mail campaign is planned early in the New Year followed by an online advertising campaign including major advertising in the new complementaryalternatives.com public access website (see first item of the Newsletter).

Major advertising is planned in other complementary and alternative magazines and the medical press. Any members or their patients whose G.Ps. have not yet heard of the Directory can download a special information sheet for NHS G.Ps. (see item Patients are a Virtue). Also members and their patients themselves can play a keyrole in publicising the Directory and help secure more funds for complementary therapy via their Patient, Advice & Liaison Co-ordinator (PAL) at their PCT, (see Patients are a Virtue).

Patience is a virtue

The Association frequently hears from CAM members who are frustrated with the slowness of response by doctors. The Association shares your frustration. This may be as a result of preconceived ideas, an unwillingness to embrace new and different belief systems, a simple lack of understanding and information, lack of appropriate mechanism in the NHS, or lack of funding.

As far as the first two are concerned the Association can only say it is going to take a mixture

of patience and persistence (exemplified by the success of the Chiropractors and Osteopaths in the ultimate recognition of their skills by statutory regulation), and a certain amount of investment and determination.

As far as the lack of understanding and information is concerned, the NHSTA is working on an ongoing basis with the Complementary and Alternative Stakeholder Organisations representing the disciplines you practise, in publishing more background and clinical information in the NHS Directory, helping doctors to gain more understanding of therapies with which they may be unfamiliar.

As far as an appropriate mechanism in the NHS is concerned, the NHSTA has already made big steps in that direction on behalf of complementary therapists, (see page 1).

As far as lack of funding is concerned, the NHSTA is in a unique position to help make Primary Care Trusts aware of the true level of demand for CAM through publishing information on complementary and alternative therapy in our official publication '**NHS Healthcare 2005**', which will be distributed to all NHS Primary Care Trusts, and through encouraging members of the public to help Primary Care Trusts and GPs become more aware of the true level of demand for CAM by publishing model letters and information sheets for GPs (see below). Once the true level of public demand is established, we believe the funding will follow.

The NHSTA will also be publishing case studies of successful locally funded CAM/NHS projects.

Remember, as membership of the Directory and public demand grows, so will its importance and influence in the eyes of orthodox medical practitioners.

Patients are a virtue

If enough of your patients go to their NHS GPs or specialists and ask to be referred to you, this is bound to raise the level of awareness amongst GPs that your patients are gaining benefit from your treatment. Whether doctors presently believe in this treatment or not, if their patients are gaining benefit, surely a doctor has a duty to pay attention.

The Association therefore suggests that members should encourage their private patients to ask their doctors for referrals to you via the NHS and give their doctor the website details so they can verify you are a member of the Directory. If the doctor refuses to refer the patient to you, the patient is entitled to ask for a reason.

If the patient is not satisfied with their doctor's response, the patient can take up their dissatisfaction with the local Primary Care Trust via the Patient Advice and Liaison Co-ordinator (PAL). We believe that this action will create a groundswell of opinion

from the grass roots level up, putting the therapy you practise on the NHS agenda. Further, by helping Primary Care Trusts to gauge the true extent of the public's demand for a therapy, they will be better able to plan and cost local healthcare needs.

The NHSTA has drafted a "model" letter for patients to send to the PAL in cases where they are encountering difficulties in obtaining complementary therapy. (This can be downloaded from the NHSTA website).

We have also prepared an information sheet about the Directory for doctors (again, downloadable from the NHSTA website) that you or your patients can give to their GP.

Bridging the gap

As an organisation indirectly connected to the world of CAM, the NHSTA is in a unique position to play a key role in bridging the gap between the world of complementary medicine on one side and the public and the National Health Service on the other.

Acupuncture and herbal medicine

NHSTA helps to shape forthcoming regulation

As many of you may already be aware, the Government is planning to regulate Herbal Medicine and Acupuncture in much the same way as Chiropractic and Osteopathy are currently regulated. In March of this year, the Joint Working Group of the Prince of Wales Foundation for Integrated Medicine (FIM) and the Department of Health published proposals for the statutory regulation of these disciplines and invited the NHSTA to participate in the consultation process. The NHSTA carefully studied the 35 page consultation document which contained over 90 proposals. While generally supporting the proposal, the NHSTA made recommendations where it felt it necessary to ensure that regulation was balanced and would enhance the status of all practitioners. It awaits the findings and will update you as soon as it has more information.

Fed up with banking errors?

NHSTA gets tough with Banks and Building Societies

Every week the Association receives several enquiries from members whose banks or building societies have made errors in the standing order payments of their membership fees. The Association is finding more and more of its time being taken up dealing with these errors. The NHSTA has written to all banks and building societies notifying them that it will deduct 20% of all monies refunded as a result of banking errors. It emphasises that it will **not** be deducting this from the members. It is making the banks pay for their errors in the hope that they will be forced to improve the service they offer to NHS Directory members.

NHS PROVIDER CODE NUMBERS. - DO YOU NEED ONE?

Very recently the Department of Health revised the advice they gave us regarding code numbers (also see 'better wait than never'). Their reply is printed below. The NHSTA is very grateful to the DoH for clarifying the position.

NACS Independent Provider Code Information

"The National Administrative Codes Service (NACS) is provided by the NHS Information Authority. It is responsible for national policy and standards for organisation and practitioner codes, which form part of the NHS data standards. The NHS Information Authority is also responsible for the day-to-day operation of the NACS and for its overall development.

The NACS is supported by a number of agencies throughout the UK. Examples are the Prescription Pricing Authority (PPA) and the Dental Practice Board, who supply codes and data for GPs and dentists. The NHS needs to recognise certain independent providers of health care.

An Independent Provider Code is an administrative code used to facilitate payments between the NHS and outside bodies. It is used as an identifier for the service provider when NHS referral work has been carried out. Therefore if you provide a service for the NHS, the code is simply used to identify you as an individual when the payment is being made.

If you are in a situation where you are entering a contract with the NHS and know that you currently do not have an Independent Provider Code then we would request that you carry out the following procedure:-

In the case of individual requests for Independent Provider Codes, there is no specific application form, we simply require a short letter or email containing the following information:

- A brief explanation of the service you provide
- Your full name and home address
- Any alternative practice address details (the home address details are our priority)
- Telephone, fax & email details where possible

As the Independent Provider Code does not involve any registration process, we do not require proof of your qualifications. It is the responsibility of the person/ group purchasing your services to check your authenticity. The possession of an Independent Provider code in *no way* indicates that the Department of Health or the NHS acknowledges the competence or otherwise of the provider. As explained in the paragraphs above, this code is merely used as a unique identifier of a person or organisation that contracts in the NHS internal market.

Independent Providers cannot promote themselves to the public or the NHS as generic 'NHS Independent Providers', 'NHS Contractors' or similar. For promotional purposes, contractors must specify which NHS organisation they are working for, after obtaining permission from that organisation.

Independent Providers cannot use the NHS logo, which is a registered trademark to the Department of Health

If an Independent Provider breaches these terms for any purpose, appropriate action will be taken. This may include referring the matter to the NHS Counter Fraud and Security Management Service, which has responsibility for all policy and operational matters relating to the prevention, detection and investigation of fraud and corruption and the management of security in the National Health Service.

We would like to reiterate the point that you must only contact us for a code if you are about to enter a contract with the NHS, we will not supply the codes unless NHS referral work has been agreed."

National Administrative Codes Service (NACS)

NACS, NHS Information Authority, Hexagon House, Pynes Hill, Exeter, EX1 3BT

nacs@nhsia.nhs.uk

01392 251289 (helpdesk)

We hope that now makes things clear. If you wish the NHSTA to apply on your behalf for a PCN, we will be pleased to do so. But at the moment, remember you will only need one if you have already been asked to provide treatment for NHS patients. Don't forget that your online entry can be updated immediately, as the site itself is updated every 24 hours. So please keep us up to date with any changes needed to your entry – change of address, phone number, e-mail address, etc.

NHSTA meets with Prince of Wales Foundation for Integrated Medicine

Earlier this year, the Chief Executive and the Secretary of the NHSTA met with Mr Michael Fox, Chief Executive of the Prince of Wales Foundation for Integrated Medicine (FIM). They were very pleased to have an opportunity to meet with the Foundation and would like to express their thanks to Mr Fox for making time to see them.

As members will no doubt be aware, the Foundation plays an important role in how complementary and alternative therapies function in the United Kingdom. The Foundation jointly conducted the DoH Working Groups on the regulation of Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine, the consultation in which the NHSTA took part.

The Association was particularly pleased to give the Foundation more information on the Directory and the role it plays in helping to make CAM available to the general public via the NHS. The two organisations have agreed to co-operate in helping bring CAM into mainline NHS healthcare.

Not everyone thinks that CAM should be available on the NHS!

The NHSTA strives very hard to help make complementary therapy available to the public via the NHS. Any organisation or individual who attempts to frustrate our efforts in doing this, by whatever means, is trying to deny you, and the public, your rightful opportunities to provide and obtain CAM on the NHS. The Association would be very grateful to hear from you if any such attempts come to your notice.

Reiki Association says sorry!

The NHSTA would like to thank the Reiki Association for withdrawing an announcement it made on its website and in its magazine suggesting that members might wish to consider withdrawing from the Directory. The Reiki Association has been kind enough to confirm that this statement has been withdrawn. They had misunderstood the basis under which the Directory is available within the National Health Service and the status of the NHSTA.

The Reiki Association has reassured its members that the concerns expressed in their announcement were unfounded and that the inclusion of the announcement in their magazine and on their website was an error on their part. The Reiki Association have also assured the NHSTA that they have written to all their members confirming their withdrawal of this announcement. Any Reiki Association member who has not received a letter to that effect should contact the Reiki Association who will, undoubtedly, be happy to provide them with a copy.

NHSTA discusses future role of NHS Directory with the DoH

Earlier this year the Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, invited the NHSTA to meet with officials of the Department of Health to discuss the future role of the NHS Directory. The Association would like to thank the Department of Health for their co-operation and interest in the Directory. The meeting was very productive and the Association has agreed to work even more closely with the Department in developing the Directory and on ways of making it more useful and effective as an NHS healthcare resource.

The NHS 'Breaking Through'

The NHSTA is currently planning a series of seminars giving the "inside track" on how to breakthrough into the NHS and develop your practice, looking at all aspects: marketing, advertising, negotiating, clinical governance, contracting, helping your patients to obtain CAM treatment via their GPs, etc.

The seminars will be an invaluable resource for all members who seriously want to know how to get the best from their membership and develop the NHS as an important new market for their practice.

As places will be limited to approximately 150 per seminar, early booking is essential. **Please do not send any money now**, but if you wish to attend, please send a pre registration request confirming your interest. The cost will be £75 for non NHS Directory members and **£29.95 for NHS Directory members**. Remember **do not send any money yet**; just send the following message by email or letter.

'Please reserve a place for me at the appropriate geographical venue for the NHS Breaking Through Seminar. I understand I do not have to pay any money at the moment. As an NHS Directory member, my fee will be £29.95.' If seminars are overbooked, places will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

NHSTA announces new category for healers

Following discussion with the National Federation for Spiritual Healers (NFSH) and the British Alliance of Healing Associations (BAHA), the NHSTA is pleased to announce the addition of a new category in the Directory for Healers.

Where have all the flowers gone?

No Bach no bite

The NHSTA has received suggestions that the section currently dedicated to Bach Flower Remedies is too restrictive and that it should be generalised to cover "Flower and Vibrational Essences". It certainly seems like a good idea. What do you think?

A New 'NHS' Opportunity?

Recently, a member contacted the Administration Office saying that they have received phone calls inviting them to pay up to £700 for a quarter page advertisement in a publication 'commissioned' by the NHS. Pressure was applied to persuade the member to place an order without seeing any written information about the publication. The member asked if the Association knew anything about the publication or its publisher?

The NHSTA made enquiries at the Department of Health. These revealed that they had not commissioned any such publication.

The Department of Health wrote to the NHSTA saying that the companies involved are independent of the Department of Health and the NHS. The DoH have asked the NHSTA to forward to them any information it can gather regarding approaches of this nature. So please let us know if you receive such an approach.

Better wait than never

The NHSTA would like to apologise to those members who have been asking when the next printed version of the Directory will be published. Following advice from the Department of Health, who told the NHSTA that complementary therapists needed to have an NHS Provider Code Number before they could be considered for NHS contracts, we wanted to allow time to obtain as many numbers on behalf of our members as we could to enable us to include their new Provider Code Numbers in the printed Directory. The next printed edition is due for publication in April 2005. (see item 'NHS Provider Code Numbers - Do You Need One?')

NHSTA consulted by DoH

NHSTA supports new DoH proposals for a CAM council

The NHSTA continues to work closely with the Department of Health in helping to regulate CAM and make it available to NHS patients. As previously mentioned, the Association recently took part in the Joint Foundation for Integrated Medicine (FIM) and DoH consultation to regulate Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine. However, as it has been repeatedly pointed out to members, it may take some time before CAM can establish itself as regular mainline NHS treatment, particularly for those disciplines that are not yet regulated by statute. So far, only Chiropractic and Osteopathy have their own statutory regulatory body. It is for this reason that in its recent consultations with the Department of Health on the subject, the NHSTA has supported the proposal for a CAM Council, not only for Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine, but also for all the major forms of CAM.

A cry from the heart

We recently received an email from a project worker at the Bath Churches Housing Association asking whether any of our members would be prepared to offer those who are on benefit private treatment at reduced costs.

The NHSTA endorses this proposal and hopes members agree that it should be a national initiative.

Would any members who are prepared to do this please notify the Administration office and we will keep a separate list. We are sure your support and generosity in this matter would be very much appreciated.

We need your email address!

It would seem that we do not have up-to-date email addresses for many of our members.

In order that you can be contacted more easily by GPs who wish to use your services, please send an email to emupdate@nhsdirectory.org, quoting your name and membership number.

The NHSTA continues to consult with all the major stakeholders in moving forward towards a time when perhaps many disciplines and their practitioners are recognised not only as efficacious, but are also included as a regular part of NHS healthcare. I hope you found this new and extended newsletter informative and interesting, please let me know what you think! Also, if you have a contribution you think would be interesting and relevant for the next newsletter, please let me have it and I would be happy to consider it for publication. Please send to editor@nhsta.org.uk. Happy new year to all our members. Ed.