

## **UPDATE**

### ***History***

The NHS Trusts Association (NHSTA) (formerly the Association of Primary Care Groups & Trusts, APCGT) held its inaugural meeting in Westminster on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2000, attended by representatives of 480 primary care groups and trusts and the press. The meeting was addressed by a senior member of the Department of Health.

The meeting unanimously approved the Constitution and the Association's method of funding, enabling it to carry out its work without cost to the British taxpayer. It appointed Dr David Tod OBE FRCGP Chief Executive. It is an "insight" member of the NHS Confederation, a member of the Federation of Primary Care Societies and the International Hospital Federation based in Geneva.

During the past eight years it has published and distributed thousands of publications throughout the NHS supportive of Department of Health initiatives, such as the National Service Framework for Coronary Heart Disease, free of charge

### ***Status***

Its status is that of an NHS "stake holding" organisation, similar to that of organisations such as the NHS Confederation, the NHS Primary care alliance, the Royal colleges the BMA etc. Its policy of free membership for NHS Trusts is a claim no other organisation can make. It is estimated that this policy saves taxpayers over £3,000,000 a year.

The NHSTA was and remains completely independent of the Department of Health and the National Health Service although the NHSTA has always supported positive Department of Health initiatives.

The NHSTA is not responsible for the decisions of the Department of Health or individual PCTs and does not receive any funding from the Department of Health. It remains independent and does not support the withholding of drugs or treatment or withholding information from patients, based on financial considerations.

### ***Philosophy***

The NHSTA believes that in this its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, the National Health Service should recommit itself to the concept that originally underpinned its foundation i.e. "healthcare for the British people free at the point of delivery".

The NHSTA believes that decisions on treatment options offered to NHS patients should be the sole responsibility of the doctors entrusted with their care and that such decisions should be informed solely by the best possible treatments available, based purely on best practice, not by what a particular PCT can afford.

The NHSTA believes that consultants and doctors have a moral, and quite possibly, a legal responsibility to inform patients of the best treatments they are aware of based purely on clinical effectiveness not on budgetary constraint.

The NHSTA believes it is not fair or reasonable on PCTs, patients or clinicians to involve administrators and managers in making decisions that may influence clinical outcomes, such as withholding drugs due to cost, highlighted by the debate surrounding the provision of Herceptin.

If the NHS is to be made to function like a business in so far as efficiency is concerned then that may well be a good thing just as long as it is clear that the product that 'NHS UK Ltd' is in the business of producing is good health, a long life of good quality, effective treatment of disease and the easing of pain and suffering for all its "customers".

### ***Membership***

The NHSTA currently has 98% of PCTs in memberships

### ***Its Publishers***

The NHSTA was established and is maintained with the assistance of a service contract with the Professional Association Development division (PAD), of the contract publishing house, Scorpio Publishing Ltd The publishers themselves do not sell any products or services to the NHS nor do they receive any public money directly or indirectly.

### ***Funding***

The service contract with its publishers was unanimously approved by the delegates to the association's inaugural meeting because it enables the Association to maintain total independence from any political or governmental influence or from the commercial interests of companies who sell drugs, products or services to the National Health Services. It also enables the Association to function without taking any public money. All its officers are unsalaried and give their time on a voluntary basis The NHSTA's constitution is committed not to use public money in carrying out its work. It receives no taxpayer's money whatsoever; it receives no revenue from any display advertising in any of its publications

### **The House of Lords**

In January 2006 the NHSTA hosted a Reception at the House of Lords; those attending included the Deputy Chief Medical Officer, members of Parliament and the House of Lords.

This well attended event heralded the launch of the NHSTA's "Saving Lives" Campaign supportive of the Department of Health's major initiative of the same name dedicated to eradicating Health Care Associated Infections (HCAIs). Guest Speaker, actress Leslie Ash, spoke poignantly about her personal experience of suffering the results of an HCAI. Dr David Tod OBE the Chief Executive of the NHSTA also addressed the reception setting out in detail the initiatives being taken by the Association in support of the fight against HCAIs.

The NHSTA held its 7<sup>th</sup> birthday party reception at the House of Lords on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2007. The guest speaker was the well known actress and president of the National Autistic society Jane Asher. At the reception the NHSTA presented Miss Asher with a research donation of £1,000 for the National Autistic Society.

The NHSTA will be holding a 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday reception for the NHS at the House of Lords on Thursday the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2008.

### **Activities**

It publishes a range of publications, which are distributed throughout the NHS free of charge. Such publications include "Coronary Care in the UK", a publication supportive of the National Service framework for coronary heart disease, "The NHSTA's Directory of Complementary and Alternative Practitioners" and "The NHSTA's Guide to Healthy Living".

The NHSTA sat on the Department of Health's Clinical Reference Group Working Party for the "capacity, plurality and choice" initiative establishing the protocol for using European healthcare providers. The Association participated in drawing up the Code of Practice for PCTs contracting with European healthcare providers and has commissioned a model contract for use by NHS PCTs for that purpose.

Officers of the Association discuss NHS issues with members of both Houses of Parliament and leading members of the medical profession. The NHSTA was the founding sponsor of The London Youth Orchestra (LYO).

### **The NHSTA's Directory of Complementary and Alternative Practitioners**

Produced in response to the findings of the House of Lords report on Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) the NHSTA has written to over 50,000 Cam practitioners (admitting 6,000 into membership) The application process includes providing detailed information of the practitioner's qualifications, training, experience, and documentary evidence of insurance. These details are independently verified by the NHSTA and members could be subject to disciplinary action in the event of proof of misconduct.

The Directory Covers a broad range of complementary and alternative therapies including herbal medicine, chiropractic, homeopathy, osteopathy, aromatherapy, Chinese medicine, reflexology and acupuncture.

The NHSTA took part in the consultation exercise with the Joint Department of Health and Prince of Wales Foundation for Integrated Medicine Working Party on the statutory regulation of Herbal Medicine and Acupuncture.

### **Personnel**

The Chairman is Dr. Bashir Qureshi FRCGP, FRCPCH. Dr. Qureshi is a medical journalist with over 40 years experience as a doctor. He was the first ethnic minority GP to be elected to the national council of the Royal college of GPs and pioneered the new discipline of Transcultural Medicine, dealing with patients from different cultures and religions.

He is a former Chairman of the Royal Society of Health and Honorary vice president of the institute of Health promotion and a member of the Medical Journalists Association (M.J.A.)

The Chief Executive is Dr David Tod, OBE M.B.Ch.B(Ed), F.R.C.G.P., Dip.Crim. (Lon). Dr Tod was a practising NHS GP in South West London for over 30 years. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine and the Royal College of General Practitioners. Following the Shipman enquiry, he was consulted by a member of the Department of Health Working Group looking into mental illness in medical practitioners. Dr Tod was the first Chairman and later President of the National Association of Fund-Holding Practises. he is also a member of the M.J.A. He was awarded the O.B.E. in 1995 for services to medicine.

The Association carries out regular membership surveys and has campaigned on a broad range of issues from the use of specialist GPs in the field of coronary care and cancer care to the provision of free travel on London transport for NHS employees.

Further information about the NHS Directory can be found at [www.nhsdirectory.org](http://www.nhsdirectory.org).

Further information about the NHSTA can be found at [www.nhsta.org.uk](http://www.nhsta.org.uk).

**Press enquiries should be marked "For the Attention of the Press Officer"**