

PRESS RELEASE

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Experts call for ‘joined-up’ NHS thinking on self care

Celebrating the first anniversary of the formation of the Self Care Forum, experts call on the NHS to adopt an integrated self care approach to help empower patients in taking control of their health

London, UK, 10th May, 2012 –

With the imminent changes in the NHS, now is the time to fundamentally change the way self care is practised in the UK, says the Self Care Forum. Speaking on the first anniversary of the Self Care Forum’s inauguration, Board member and NHS Future Forum member Professor David Haslam warned: “For the NHS to survive, it needs to prioritise self care. That requires joined-up thinking to promote self care as part of the very fabric of the NHS.”

Since the Self Care Forum came into being on May 10th, 2011, the NHS has undergone a period of sustained change, creating an unparalleled opportunity to embed self care as a fundamental element of healthcare. “Everyone, including all those involved in the design, management and provision of health services and the wider public, should recognise the importance of self care and its central role in helping empower people to take control of their lives,” said Stephanie Varah, Chief Executive of the National Association for Patient Participation (NAPP), the national patient champion for the Self Care Forum campaign.

Not only does self care help empower patients, there are benefits for healthcare professionals too. “I experience a much more relaxed appointment with a person who has tried self care,” said nurse facilitator and Board member Sara Richards. “It’s a better use of a healthcare professional’s time if people have taken some self care measures.”

Encouraging self care is a move endorsed by the Department of Health in its championing of the work of the Self Care Forum. Paul Burstow, Minister for Care Services, who spoke at the 12th Self Care Conference in November, 2011, is delighted at the Forum’s achievements in its first year, but recognises more work is required. “We know that people who self care feel empowered and in control, so it is great that the Self Care Forum has achieved so much in its first year. There is more work for them to do and they are looking at continuing to develop information for patients on when it’s safe to self care, but on-line training for GPs

and a practice guide to set up support for self care in practice are excellent achievements and pave the way to move from promoting self care to embedding it into everyday life. I wish them continued success and look forward to Self Care Week 2012."

Gopa Mitra, Public Affairs Director at the Proprietary Association of Great Britain believes the time is right for the Self Care Forum to expand its work and drive for essential change. "For self care to truly work, we have to revolutionise how we promote and encourage self-care practice, from healthcare professionals, the UK population to the NHS."

Royal College of Nursing Chief Executive and General Secretary Dr Peter Carter highlighted how this could work, citing nurses as an example. "Nurses across the UK work in a huge variety of settings which gives them the opportunity to encourage a significant number of people to self care. Nurses themselves can also adopt this approach in their own lives and so provide examples to the people they look after."

Since the Self Care Forum was founded, it has achieved over a third of its stated nine aims, such as launching the first GP elearning training course on self care in tandem with the Royal College of General Practitioners (sign up for free at <http://elearning.rcgp.org.uk/login/index.php>) and organising national Self Care Week. The Forum will continue to examine ways to embed self care at its Self Care conference and throughout Self Care Week this coming November. For more information on the work of the Self Care Forum, including the communications pack for Self Care Week, or to become a self care champion, visit www.selfcareforum.org.

-ENDS-

A number of the Board members who are involved in the Self Care Forum are available for interview. Please contact us to arrange this.

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Notes to Editors:

The purpose of the Self Care Forum is to further the reach of self-care and embed it into everyday life. As part of this, the Self Care Forum has outlined a series of nine aims, of which over a third have been achieved within the first year:

1. Gather case study examples of self care in practice. These are available on the Self Care Forum website at www.selfcareforum.org
2. Ensure wide communications of case studies to NHS and Directors of Public Health. This is ongoing
3. Develop criteria to measure impact of self care for minor ailment. This project is in development
4. Promote and support professional education on self care aware consultations. The Self Care Forum has created the first Royal College of General Practitioners' elearning module on self care
5. Promote a practice guide of the top ten tips for setting up support for self care in practice. This is completed and on the website
6. Get health education about self care into the national curriculum in schools. The SCF has submitted a response to the consultation on PSHE
7. Communicate Self Care Forum messages into the mass media. This is ongoing
8. Develop information about when it is safe to self care and when not. The first of these guides, on back pain, is now in patient testing
9. Promote and support Self Care week. This is ongoing.

The Self Care Forum Board comprises representatives of doctor, nurse, pharmacy and patient organisations with the common aim of promoting and encouraging individual self care. The Board members are:

- Professor Mike Pringle, CBE, GP
- Dr Paul Stillman, GP
- Dr Peter Smith, OBE, National Association for Primary Care
- Sara Richards, Nurse Facilitator
- Dr Simon Fradd, Concordia Health
- Dr Ian Banks, Pharmacovigilance Taskforce, DG Sanco, European Commission
- Dr Michael Dixon, OBE, NHS Alliance
- Dr Raj Patel, GP
- Dr Steve Boorman, Abermed (Occupational Health Consultant)
- Professor Nigel Sparrow, GP
- Susan Summers, North West SHA
- Professor David Haslam, CBE, GP
- Dr John Chisholm, CBE, Concordia Health
- Gopa Mitra, MBE, Proprietary Association of Great Britain
- Mark Duman, Patient Information Forum
- Dr Amir Hannan, GP
- Dr Knut Schroeder, GP
- Professor Sue Cross, nursing education
- Jeremy Taylor, National Voices
- Dr Peter Carter, OBE, Royal College of Nursing
- Lynn Young
- Stephanie Varah, National Association for Patient Participation
- Michael Holden, National Pharmacy Association
- Peter Baker, Men's Health Forum
- Dr Gill Jenkins, GP
- Dr Jim Lawrie, GP
- Dr Sam Everington, OBE, GP
- Dr Patricia Wilkie, NAPP
- Dr Jag S. Dhaliwal, GP, NHS Institute
- Mike Farrar, NHS Confederation
- Stephen Johnson, Department of Health
- Angela Hawley, Department of Health
- Sheila Kelly, OBE, Proprietary Association of Great Britain.