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Andrew Foster  
Director of Workforce  
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Richmond House  
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18 August 2005

Dear Sir Andrew Foster

### **Review of non-medical professional regulation: Call for ideas**

I understand that you have called for ideas regarding the regulation of the non-medical healthcare force, and will be making recommendations about changes needed to the role, structure, functions and number of regulators of non-medical healthcare professional staff. Although the Foundation has not formally been invited to respond, we would like to make the following observations, which I hope you will find useful.

The Prince of Wales's Foundation for Integrated Health is working with complementary healthcare professions on the development of improved systems of voluntary self-regulation. The Foundation acts as a forum to promote and support discussion and as a centre for driving forward the integrated healthcare agenda. On-going work includes providing support to a number of complementary healthcare councils/forum to facilitate the development of robust forms of voluntary self-regulation, and we have recently received a grant of £900,000 from the Department of Health, to fund a further three year programme for this work.

The Foundation was actively involved in supporting the professions of acupuncture and herbal medicine in their recent bid for statutory self-regulation. This was, primarily, because of the potential risks to patients. However, we do not consider it necessary for all complementary healthcare professions to go down this route at this time. The cost of statutory regulation may be disproportionate to the opportunity costs involved and a voluntary system of self-regulation is probably adequate in most cases. If, at some future date, statutory regulation is considered appropriate for any of the professions, the work towards a voluntary self-regulating system may well smooth the way.


A growing number of complementary therapists are working in NHS settings and are keen to demonstrate that they are appropriately educated, safe, competent and

regulated practitioners. An important element of the various complementary therapy professions work has been the development of common standards of training and practice and much progress has been made along the path to voluntary self-regulation. The Foundation is now working closely with eleven different complementary therapy professions (see Appendix attached), who are participating in a programme of work which will see the establishment of profession-specific single registers of complementary healthcare practitioners, in some cases as early as 2007.

We have been working closely with other statutory health regulators, who have been a source of guidance and advice on regulation issues and have provided models for the emerging voluntary bodies. We believe there is a growing need to develop links between statutory and voluntary regulatory bodies, to ensure a consistent approach to issues that cross the boundaries between them.

The Foundation would be pleased to provide further information about the models of voluntary self-regulation under development.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pamela Jack" followed by a horizontal flourish.

Pamela Jack  
Programme Manager - Regulation

## APPENDIX

The following groups have been offered a place on the Prince of Wales's Foundation for Integrated Health regulation programme (2005-2008).

- Alexander Technique Voluntary Self-Regulatory Group
- Aromatherapy Consortium
- Bowen Forum
- British Council for Yoga Therapists
- Council of Organisations Registering Homeopaths
- Cranial Forum
- General Council for Massage Therapy
- General Naturopathic Council
- Nutritional Therapy Council
- Reflexology Forum
- UK Healers