

Mr Frank McAveety MSP
Convener
Public Petitions Committee
TG.01
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

20 February 2009

Dear Mr McAveety,

St Margaret of Scotland Hospice (Petition PE1105)

I refer to the letter of 18 February 2009 from Ms Nicola Sturgeon, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing and note the points made in reference to the need for “constructive dialogue” between NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and the Board of St Margaret of Scotland Hospice.

It was due to the breakdown in dialogue between the two I supported the suggestion of an independent mediator. Indeed, Ms Anne Harkness suggested in a telephone call with a Hospice supporter, the reason the dialogue had broken down was due to the Hospice involving MSPs; something which the Hospice and its supporters have every right to do.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde’s “engagement with its stakeholders” throughout the extensive “period of time” which “these matters have been under consideration” has been disappointing in the extreme. At the Health Board meetings in October and December 2008, the Hospice situation was removed from the agenda. However, during the Chief Executive’s report, he commented on the lack of co-operation from the Hospice Board. This was despite the Hospice submitting two proposals to the Health Board (July and October) and only once receiving one comment “read with interest.” There has been no feedback whatsoever from the Health Board to either of the proposals submitted to them.

I am aware this “issue” will be discussed at the next meeting of the Health Board on 24 February 2009 and can only hope they will reach a logical decision to secure the future of the Hospice. The fact a paper is being issued at this meeting and a decision likely to be reached – again without consulting the Hospice as to the content of the paper – speaks volumes regarding the lack of engagement by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and its partners.

The funding St Margaret of Scotland Hospice receives for Palliative Care services is not comparable to that of other Hospices in Scotland, as I have outlined in my previous detailed letter to the Committee. No discussion has taken place between the Hospice and Health Board regarding this funding. However, a Hospice representative will make a formal presentation to the Scottish Hospices Forum in May 2009 regarding “the current arrangements for NHS funding provided to the voluntary Hospices in Scotland.”

Yours sincerely

Marjorie McCance
Campaign Manager