

PE1568/B

Elaine Smith MSP Email of 4 June 2015

Submission from Elaine Smith to Public Petitions Committee regarding PE015680 by Catherine Hughes on "Funding, access and promotion of the NHS Centre for Integrative Care"

Dear Ned

I have an interest in the above petition and as you are aware I will be coming along on Tuesday to support it. I thought it appropriate, therefore, to also put my views on the petition in writing.

I am deeply concerned that national access to the Centre for Integrative Care (CIC) services is now being restricted severely in Scotland by health boards.

There are also other national implications over the way health boards can handle submissions on health service closures of any kind at key decision points. Through the work carried out when putting together this petition, this has been exposed and it reveals concerns that NHS Lanarkshire did not make public the actual number of patients involved. However, as the Scottish Health Council (SHC) believes in transparency, the SHC's letter of November 5 2014 raises issues with NHS Lanarkshire which contrasts with references to SHC approval of the process by NHS Lanarkshire and the Scottish Government.

I have concerns with regards to the process used to make decisions such as the one relating to CIC services. Private negotiations by health boards presenting their one sided cases are in need of review. Additionally, elected members seem to be excluded from the process of making decisions and are not being informed exactly what is being negotiated about their constituents. Elected members should have been informed, for instance, that statistics on several hundred return patients were excluded from documents presented to the SHC, and only 270 estimated new patients were in the figures. Return patient numbers are vital with chronic conditions.

My particular interest is in the fate of my constituents suffering long term chronic illness as the CIC clinic at Coatbridge who will be forced to lose a much valued service as will those attending the CIC clinic at Carluke. NHS Lanarkshire's repetition that existing patients will be able to complete their treatment until discharge does not change the final outcome: closure for these clinics.

These patients will be the last to have access to this service unless this unjust decision is rightly overturned. The fact that only nine Board members voted against the wishes of 4,800 people in a public consultation is concerning.

Lanarkshire needs to increase help for chronic conditions patients rather than remove a service that many of my constituents rely on.

Kind regards

Elaine Smith MSP