



PRESS RELEASE

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Opposition are distorting information for party political ends

The latest statement issued by the Opposition following an informal straw poll of some doctors is little more than another transparent attempt to distort information for party political ends. They have chosen to rely on an unofficial survey from a sample of only 31 doctors out of a total of 81.5 full time doctors in employment.

A large and equally important component of the GHA medical workforce, our GPs at the Primary Care Centre, were not included in the poll and this obviously impacts on the strength of the results and skews its statistical significance. It is also important and noteworthy that even then the survey actually highlighted that 61% of doctors did not feel low on morale.

The results of this informal discussion document is now being used by the Opposition to scaremonger the public. This was obviously not its intended purpose, which was to inform organisational dialogue providing constructive insight aimed at improving medical services. On a close inspection of this informal document it is clear that the results are opinions and perceptions as opposed to independently verified or empirical evidence.

The report suggests that Doctors are not included or engaged in the management of the GHA. This perception is not supported by any evidence and the GHA robustly rejects this unfounded allegation. The facts are that there has never been, in any time in the history of the GHA, more clinician involvement in the GHA's management structure. This is demonstrated by the re-establishment of the Medical Advisory Committee (MAC), a statutory body established in law, which had been ignored by the previous administration.

It is important to note that there are now actually 10 Doctors directly and formally appointed into key management positions. This represents 12% of the Medical workforce, with inclusion at all levels of management, including, statutory bodies, such as the GHA Board, where 2 Doctors hold full voting membership positions.

GHA management is working closely with medical staff to enhance patient safety and clinical quality at the GHA. For example, a new and safer prescription chart has just been approved and the GHA is also looking to implement an internal reporting system to highlight areas for improvement called Datix, which has been led by the GHA consultants themselves.



With respect to issues of morale, it will not have escaped the notice of the Opposition, that there is an active recruitment process into a number of key clinical positions currently underway, which will undoubtedly bring about further improvements. These have targeted medical staffing increases to improve the service provision in the following areas: ITU/Anaesthetics, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Paediatrics, Medical department, Elderly Residential Care.

The GHA is also poised to implement the Consultant Contract, which was not addressed by the previous government from 2004 to 2011. The present administration is fully committed to achieving this and are finally, after complex and protracted negotiations, in a position to achieve this.

Further, Doctors have been an integral part of the development of the Day Surgery Unit, which has revolutionised the delivery of surgery for the people of Gibraltar and the new Chemotherapy Unit, which will allow patients to be treated in Gibraltar, closer to home during a difficult time in their life.

Minister for Health, Care & Justice, the Hon Neil F Costa MP said: "The Opposition are being alarmist and are creating undue public concern. As usual, they have their facts wrong and are relying on distortion and exaggeration to discredit Government. The GHA is therefore confident, that whilst more is still to be done, it remains fully engaged with the Medical Management Team and all clinicians. Given former GSD Ministers' Health performances in their tenure, Government will not take any lessons from the Opposition and I urge them to continue with their transparent and cheap political theatrics, which, I have no doubt, the people of Gibraltar will see through. I must conclude by saying that my dear friend and colleague Dr John Cortes has done more to repatriate health services and improve the quality of clinical governance and medical care than the Opposition ever did when they had the chance."