



Ben Bradshaw MP
 Minister of State
 Department of Health
 Richmond House
 79 Whitehall
 London
 SW1A 2NL

Thursday 10 July, 2008

Dear Minister,

We represent patients, doctors, nurses and cosmetic clinics throughout the country. We have joined together to oppose Government proposals to remove non-surgical laser treatments from regulation by the Healthcare Commission.

Whilst we await the final proposals, including the removal of non-surgical Class 3B and 4 lasers and intense light sources, we are concerned that these suggestions are being taken forward on the basis that the risk presented to the public by these services is small. However, this is not necessarily the case, as the National Minimum Standards describes Class 4 and intense pulsed lights as powerful devices which have 'the potential to cause serious injury' if faulty or used incorrectly.

The proposal is based on a consultation document which acknowledges that these plans would likely lead to a doubling in the rate of 'adverse incidents', such as burns and skin damage, costing an extra £1.8 million to the NHS. However, we believe that the consultation underestimates the impact of such a change. Despite acknowledging that this industry is growing, the consultation's figures do not factor in any growth or the knock-on effects to the number of people harmed by these treatments. We also believe the Government has underestimated the cost to the NHS, and ignored the potential cost to the growing cosmetic treatment industry if public trust is damaged.

The Government has previously committed to a review of the regulation of this sector and accepted the need for more consistent enforcement of current legislation. We are not aware of any progress that justifies the apparent 'U-turn' which has led to the decision to abandon statutory regulation of cosmetic laser treatments.

We are therefore writing to call for a halt to this proposal. At the very least, we believe that the commencement date of 1 October for deregulation does not provide suitable time for full consideration and debate of these proposals and should therefore be delayed. This would allow time for alternative statutory

regimes to be presented and considered by Parliament and the Department of Health.

In addition, we believe that this is a matter for the public interest and therefore have made this an open letter.

For more information contact Jenny Driscoll at jenny.driscoll@which.co.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Walsh, Chief Executive, Action against Medical Accidents
Godfrey Town, Secretary, Association of Laser Protection Healthcare Advisers
Roy Henderson, Chairman, Association of Laser Safety Professionals
John Lowry, Chairman, British Academy of Cosmetic Practice
Douglas McGeorge, President, British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons
Valerie Cooke, Chairman, British Association of Beauty Therapy and Cosmetology
John Curran, President, British Association of Cosmetic Doctors
Dr Mark Goodfield, President, British Association of Dermatologists
A. Roger Green, President, British Association of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons
Dr R J Barlow, Chairman, British Cosmetic Dermatology Group
Professor Harry Mosely, Honorary President, British Medical Laser Association
Sarah Pope, Chairman, British Skin Laser Study Group
Andrew Vallance-Owen, Group Medical Director, BUPA
Harry Cayton, former Chair, Expert Group on the Regulation of Cosmetic Surgery
James Partridge OBE, Chief Executive, Changing Faces
David Gault, Consultant Plastic Surgeon
Christopher Rowland Payne, Secretary-General, European Society for Cosmetic and Aesthetic Dermatology
Mr Braham, Chairman, The Harley Medical Group
Dr Sean Lanigan, Consultant Dermatologist and Clinical Lead of the Birmingham Regional Skin Laser Centre and City Hospital
Dr M Robertson, Laser Specialist, Laserase
Dr P Dobson, Medical Director and Chartered Radiation Protection Practitioner, Laser Care Services
Paul Tozer, Managing Director, Lasermet
Dr Nicholas J Lowe, Cranley Clinic
Paul Stapleton, Managing Director, Mapperley Park Clinic
David Brassington, Managing Director, Renew Medica
Howard Catton, Head of Policy, Royal College of Nursing
Andy Randall, Managing Director, SK:N
Rachel Hawkes, Chair of Board of Trustees, Verity
Helen McCallum, Director of Policy and Communications, Which?
Ella Tracey, Managing Director, White Light Skin Clinic