

## NHS Outcomes Framework - Consultation

### Overview

The Department of Health has today published the first of five consultation documents to support the publication of *Liberating the NHS*, the Health White Paper, ahead of the publication of the Health Bill later this year. This first consultation focuses on the proposed NHS Outcomes Framework, which will be a list of goals against which to measure the performance of the NHS. The Framework is designed to mark the shift from national level process targets, which has of course been the core criticism of the previous Government's approach to managing the NHS.

The Department of Health has confirmed that the four remaining consultation documents will be published in the coming weeks. Given that the recess begins next Wednesday, we would expect these to be published by then however timings have not been confirmed. The additional consultations will focus on:

- Commissioning for patients – covering GP Commissioning
- Regulating healthcare providers
- Local democratic legitimacy in health
- The review of arm's-length bodies

While the 'commissioning' and 'regulation' consultations are likely to cover the key issues facing the pharmaceutical industry that are tied up in the legislation, today's consultation does provide some detail on the expanded role of NICE in providing Quality Standards for treatment across disease areas. EMIG will therefore need to give consideration to opportunities for engagement with the consultation.

Included below is a summary of the key detail in the consultation that you may wish to consider responding to.

- As outlined in last week's White Paper, the NHS Outcomes Framework will set the overarching goals of the NHS Commissioning Board and ensure its accountability. The Outcomes Framework will not set out the process for achieving the positive health aims it sets out.
- Once the Outcomes Framework is established, the NHS Commissioning Board will then work with GP consortia to establish the tools for delivery on the ground, using NICE Quality Standards as a guide.
- The 5 broad outcomes - "domains" - contained in the framework are:
  1. Preventing people from dying prematurely
  2. Enhancing quality of life for people with long-term conditions
  3. Helping people to recover from episodes of ill health or following injury
  4. Ensuring people have a positive experience of care
  5. Treating and caring for people in a safe environment and protecting them from avoidable harm
- Within each domain, the Outcomes Framework will set out the broad outcomes indicator – what success will look like; a set of improvement areas – specific areas where improvements can be made by the NHS Commissioning Board and GP consortia; and the Quality Standards – guidelines set by NICE on how improved standards should be delivered.

## **NICE Quality Standards**

- The detail on NICE's new obligation to set Quality Standards for commissioning was set out in last week's White Paper, however there is no further detail in today's document.
- Quality standards will provide the authoritative standards for each part of the patient pathway and specific indicators for each step. There will be five to ten quality statements for each standard of care. NICE will work to develop 150 standards over the next five years starting, with the first three – stroke, dementia and prevention of venous thromboembolism – published in June 2010.

## *Timeline*

- The deadline for this consultation is **11 October 2010** with a Government response scheduled for earlier November 2010.