

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London, SW1A 2NS

2nd July 2018

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Primary care education tariff

I am writing to update you on the latest worrying developments regarding the Primary Care Education Tariff Review, and to ask for your personal intervention to secure the implementation of an agreed approach to increase the funding of undergraduate placements in primary care.

As you will be aware, in conjunction with representatives from your Department and Health Education England (HEE), we have been working with the Royal College of GPs and the academic GP community to establish the true cost of funding undergraduate placements in primary care. This culminated in a Working Group led by your colleagues accepting the conclusion of an agreed cost collection exercise which established that the true cost of placing a student full time in general practice was approximately £37k per annum. This indicates that approximately £20 million (per year) of additional funding is needed to fully cover the costs borne by GP training practices, raising to approximately £31 million (per year) to reflect the recent increase in medical student numbers.

It was consequently agreed that a national flat-rate tariff for all clinical placements (whether in primary or secondary care) should be established, therefore fulfilling the recommendation in the Health Committee's 2016 Primary Care Report that *'the Government accelerate their work to create a payment mechanism which reflects the true cost to GP practices of teaching medical students'*.

The November 2016 report by HEE and the Medical Schools Council *'By choice – not by chance, Supporting medical students towards future careers in general practice'* made clear the impact of underfunding primary care placements. It noted that adequate resourcing is absolutely essential if general practitioners are to have protected time to teach without detriment to patient care, and advised that placements for general practice in medical school can only be successful if teaching in the community is adequately and appropriately resourced, with transparent accountability against that available for hospital trusts.



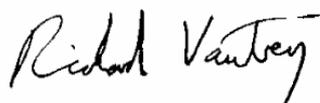
It was therefore hugely disappointing to learn that Department officials have not made any changes to the funding of undergraduate primary care placements in 2018, nor were they able to provide a guarantee that the required funding would be made available in the future.

The BMA remains concerned that the government's plans to increase the number of GPs will not be realised until an end to the long-term underfunding of undergraduate placements is addressed to attract and secure the future GP workforce. General practice is experiencing one of the most severe recruitment and retention crises in decades, with too few doctors choosing general practice as a career – it is therefore vital that the government urgently provides the necessary funds to enable practices to continue to train and therefore attract the next generation of GPs.

As such, I believe a rapid review of the funding decision recently taken by your Department is necessary, and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this in more detail.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Vautrey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Dr Richard Vautrey
Chair, BMA general practitioners committee