

British Medical Association  
bma.org.uk

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**Representing BMA members in Northumberland,  
Tyne & Wear, County Durham and Teesside**

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**Northern Regional  
Council**

## Press Release re: Summary Care Record

Traditionally, a patient's complete personal, and often intimate, medical records are kept strictly private within the confines of their GP's practice with a strictly controlled and limited access by a small number of professional people within the practice. That information is shared with other professional colleagues, such as hospital consultants, on a "need to know" basis.

Many doctors have serious and genuine concerns about the "uplifting" of patient medical records to a centrally-controlled data base which they fear will lead to access being available to those records by many thousands of people working in the health service across the country.

Many doctors believe the Government is being disingenuous in the method it is employing to achieve this end. They are insisting that there is an "opt out" basis of consent for records to be uplifted rather than an "opt in" system, meaning that the vast majority of patients by doing nothing are allowing their records to be shared. The BMA Northern Council believes that this is not a true "informed" consent for those records to leave the safe keeping of their GP.

The BMA initially agreed to support the "piloting" of the Government's ideas in some areas, but believes there has been insufficient evidence from those pilots to support the rapid roll out of the scheme across the country. We can not support a system which does not support proper informed consent and that most patients do not understand. The fear is that this is being rapidly escalated to cover the enormous waste there has been of 12 Billion pounds already spent on the national NHS IT system.

Dr Roger N Ford  
Hon Secretary  
Northern Regional Council  
British Medical Association

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010