To: All Directors of Commissioning for Primary Care Trusts in England
Copy: All Chairmen of Professional Executive Committees at Primary Care Trusts in England
                National Specialised Commissioning Team (Commissioning Advisory Group)

ROCR Reference Number: ROCR/08/028
Gateway Reference Number: 10909

24 November 2008

GP DATA ON NHS CHOICES

Dear Colleague

I am writing to advise of an initiative that is being undertaken to ensure that core information about GP practices, including opening hours, is correct on NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk)

This is being done in advance of PCTs distributing literature to households detailing those practices that are now offering extended hours. As the public will be signposted to NHS Choices for full information on local GP services, it is essential that data on the website is accurate. We know from our research, that in some instances this is not currently the case.

It is for this reason that the NHS Information Centre (NHSIC) is about to embark on an England-wide exercise, to contact each GP practice to quality assure the data on practice/surgery opening times, especially in respect of any extended hours services that are being offered, that appear on the NHS Choices website.

Once the information is collected, it will be managed as follows. For those practices that do not manage their own data, the information will be passed by the NHSIC to the appropriate PCT web editor, with a request to review and veto any changes to be made on a defined date by NHS Choices or make changes where required themselves. Where GP practices are managing their own profiles and where inaccuracies are discovered the NHSIC will request that the practice corrects their details as soon as possible. The information will also be sent to the PCIS to update their records.

We expect that the NHSIC will commence this exercise this week and envisage that it will take about four weeks for all 8,500 GP practices in England to be contacted.
I should be grateful if you would inform all GP practices in your area that this exercise will be taking place and to seek their cooperation in ensuring that it is completed satisfactorily.

I am grateful to PCTs for their assistance in this exercise.

Yours sincerely,

Gary Ashby
Programme Director
NHS Choices