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cc/No

PRIME MINISTER

NHS ANNUAL REPORT

I have thought for some time that we should do more to publicise developments in the health service in England in recent years. The debate on health tends to be almost exclusively in terms of what the Government is spending on the health service. I believe we should tell the public what the service is doing with these resources in terms of the services actually provided. Here there is also a good story to tell.

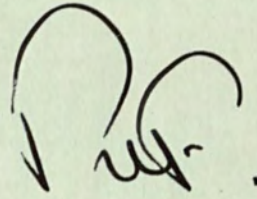
We began this with our publication in early 1983 of 'Health Care and Its Costs' and I think it worthwhile to develop the messages put over, for the first time, in that publication and set out the important progress we have made since. The achievements need, however, to be balanced against the challenges the health service still faces in terms of rising demands for more and better services and, most importantly, in terms of making the best use of available resources. We can take the opportunity here of writing up the wide range of action the Government is taking to improve the management of the NHS for the benefit of patients.

I propose to do this by introducing a new series of reports on the health services in England. The first such report - of which I enclose a draft copy - takes a look over the last five years in particular rather than concentrating simply on the last twelve months. It will set the scene for subsequent reports - which I expect to publish annually.

I intend to publish the report at the beginning of October. To keep to that timetable I would accordingly be very glad to have any comments which you and colleagues might have by Friday 21 September.

E.R.

Copies of this minute and the draft report go to Willie Whitelaw, Nigel Lawson, George Younger, Nicholas Edwards, Douglas Hurd and Sir Robert Armstrong.



14 September 1984

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