SUBMISSION FROM THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

1. The British Medical Association (BMA) would like to draw your attention to its concerns regarding the Public Records (Scotland) Bill. Although the Association is aware that the Education Committee’s call for written evidence has now closed, as oral evidence is still being taken, it hopes that the Committee will still be able to consider our comments.

2. Our understanding is that GPs will be covered by the definition in section 3 of the Bill as they carry out functions of the NHS board with regard to patient records.

3. Whilst policies and procedures for the management of patient records in the NHS, including GP records, are well established, we are concerned that boards may be able to impose plans on record management on GPs and require them to manage those records in a particular way. Our concern is that such changes may be imposed without consultation with GP practices at a local level. We believe that consultation is essential to ensure that any changes are not onerous on practices, are achievable and do not impinge on the GP contract.

4. The BMA would therefore urge the Committee to consider incorporating a requirement to consult with contractors (in this case, GP practices) prior to implementing changes to the management of public records.

Martin Woodrow
Scottish Secretary
20 December 2010