



## **News Release**

### **Campaigning pays off, says community hospitals champion**

Months of campaigning have led to a complete Government u-turn on community hospitals, according to leading campaigner Graham Stuart MP.

The Conservative MP, who leads an all-party pressure group, CHANT (Community Hospitals Acting Nationally Together), said, "I am delighted. We have won the argument. The Government seems to have recognised the vital role played by local hospitals in communities up and down the country."

Graham has welcomed the Health Secretary's commitment to ensure that 5 per cent of the NHS budget- about £2.5 billion- is shifted from secondary to primary care, as well as her belief that community facilities should not be 'closed down due to short-term budgetary problems.'

While over 80 community hospitals continue to face the threat of closure, the Health Secretary has stated that they should only close if they are considered to be clinically unviable, or unused by the local community.

Graham said, "In the vast majority of cases, the whole community has come together to fight for local health care. In Ludlow constituency, over 10,000 people marched in a single day in support of their hospitals. Hundreds of people made written representations on behalf of the Minor Injuries Unit at Hornsea Cottage Hospital in my constituency. All opposed its closure.

"The fight goes on. The Government has made promises before. Communities want to know how quickly closures will be put on hold. More than 80 hospitals and 1100 beds are under threat right now. We need to know how this guidance will be applied and financed."

CHANT will continue putting pressure on Ministers. "We will not rest until the programme of hospital and bed closures across the country is reversed. We are holding a mass lobby of parliament on March 28<sup>th</sup> to demonstrate the support for community hospitals. The White Paper shows that the Government has finally understood that community hospitals are an important part of a modern, locally based, National Health Service. They need to turn that aspiration into a reality."

**Notes to Editors:**

Further details on CHANT's campaigns and patrons can be found at [www.chantonline.com](http://www.chantonline.com).