East of England
All Party Parliamentary Group
Co-Chairs: Jess Asato MP & Pam Cox MP
Vice-Chairs: Blake Stephenson MP & Marie Goldman MP

Dear Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP

IMPLEMENTING PROVEN HEALTH INNOVATIONS WILL IMPROVE PATIENT OUTCOMES, TACKLE HEALTH INEQUITY, RELEASE NHS CAPACITY AND DRIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

As you know, innovation is quite rightly at the heart of the Government's recent *Fit for the Future: 10 Year Health Plan for England.* This sets out the central role of innovations in technology, prevention and community health in driving the improved NHS that we need for our country. Following the recent meeting of the East of England APPG, held in partnership with Health Innovation East, we are now writing to you to share our conclusions and key 'asks'. (Please see the report of the meeting for more background information.)

The UK remains an international leader in the amount of funding UK invests in the early stage health and life sciences research and discoveries that give rise to innovation. However, it is still the case that the difficulties and resources required to implement these innovations at scale in order to capitalise on the opportunity to deliver the health and wealth benefits set out in the 10 Year Plan is consistently underestimated.

Implementing innovation in an NHS site is a complex process involving significant change management. Local knowledge and adaptation are required to ensure that proven successes from one site can be translated successfully to another and scaled regionally and nationally. Health and care providers therefore need the resources, time and, crucially, freedom to adopt innovations.

We appreciate the indication in the 10 Year Plan that funding for innovation will be allocated on a multi-year basis and wish to emphasise how necessary we believe this is to reassure the companies with solutions to our most pressing health challenges that the NHS is committed to supporting and purchasing their products.

As the government delivers on the vision laid out in the *10 Year Health Plan*, we ask that examples of excellence in the East of England are scaled up so that in effect you are taking the best of the NHS to the rest. We also ask that:

- ***The East of England be selected for inclusion as one of the proposed Regional Health Innovation Zones*** set out in the Plan. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB region already presents a compelling case for inclusion, with a Mayoral Combined Authority embedded at the heart of a world-leading life sciences ecosystem; an 'Innovation Landing Zone' infrastructure developed by Cambridge University Health Partners; and 'Heads of Innovation' roles working alongside Health Innovation East in four of the region's current ICBs to accelerate the adoption of innovations.

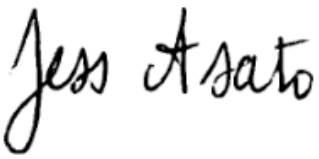
- ***Provide support to embed proven health innovations in initiatives supporting people into employment.*** The East of England has an unemployment rate of 4.8%, compared to a UK average of 4.7%. This is the context for programmes such as Cambridgeshire & Peterborough's 'Youth Guarantee' pilot and Essex County Council's supported employment programme. The Health Foundation found that people with work limiting mental health conditions are half as likely to be in work, and as such we propose that employment programmes are an ideal opportunity to implement mental health innovations. For example, Tend VR is an evidence-backed, resource efficient method of improving people's mental health through VR technology.

- ***Ensure the ICB duty to deliver public health prevention is maintained, in line with the devolution agenda.*** With the current restructuring of ICBs and the understandable focus on clearing the elective waitlists, there is a danger that the prevention aspects of health commissioning will be lost. Exemplars of this coordinated approach can be seen in innovations which, leveraging support from Health Innovation East, have become central to local public health strategies, such as Sisu Health: identifying and managing health risks such as obesity via self-service community health stations. Results across the East show that from over 71,000 health checks undertaken to-date, 48% were from the most deprived IMD deciles and 14,765 people were advised to contact their GP.

The East of England's industrial base includes strong Life Sciences, health and data assets, yet as a region it is also characterised by significant health inequalities, particularly for rural and coastal communities. Implementing innovation is key to ensuring that the UK's significant funding for early-stage health and life sciences R&D converts to improved health for local populations and less advantaged communities.
Ensuring that people feel the benefit of the government's investment in life sciences is a core component for the sector's sustained growth – innovating alongside patients and communities as partners, not subjects, to ensure they see tangible benefits in their lives. Our region welcomes increasingly devolved health powers, recognising that taking a place-based approach to health needs and integrating budgets will empower local systems and better enable them to tackle the systemic and social causes which are often the root causes for ill-health.

We have a strong regional foundation for finding, testing and implementing innovations in health and care. We look forward to working together to ensure that proven innovations delivering improved health outcomes, system efficiency and effective prevention are resourced and scaled: taking the best to the rest.

Yours sincerely,



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