

STATES OF JERSEY



RECIPROCAL HEALTH AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM: NEGOTIATIONS (P.39/2010) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 10th May 2010
by the Minister for Health and Social Services**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

I am delighted to support this proposition as it will ensure that a collective resource is brought to future negotiations with Her Majesty's Government in relation to the Reciprocal Health Agreement with Jersey.

The discontinuation of the long-standing agreement has been a particular concern of mine from the outset of my time as Minister of Health and Social Services. I recognise the considerable anxiety and confusion that changes introduced unilaterally by the U.K. Government have caused, particularly for the elderly or for those with pre-existing conditions who have often found it hard to obtain health insurance when wishing to visit friends and relatives on the mainland.

These points were discussed at a recent meeting with the Right Honourable Alain Beith, M.P., in his role as Chair of the Justice Committee within the House of Commons. This was in relation to that Committee's review of the handling by the U.K. of constitutional arrangements with the Crown Dependencies. The final report of the Committee concluded that: "the lack of consultation and discussion of possible options, with each Crown Dependency was a failing in the U.K. Government's approach to its responsibilities in deciding the future of the Reciprocal Health Agreements".

In seeking to negotiate a new agreement, a number of steps have been taken. My Acting Chief Officer, together with the Director of International Affairs, now have a meeting scheduled in early June with representatives of the U.K. Department of Health as part of a new, more collaborative approach already being undertaken in seeking to negotiate revised arrangements. The extension of the Isle of Man agreement until September on the basis of reciprocal care, but without an exchange of money between the U.K. and the Isle of Man, is providing a useful model for the future, and the Director of International Affairs is liaising closely with both the Isle of Man and the U.K. Department of Health as they work to conclude the terms of this extended arrangement.

As I have said previously, I am committed to ensuring maximum benefit and value for money for the people of Jersey seeking access to appropriate treatment in the U.K. and welcome this proposition as an opportunity to fulfil that commitment.