

people, a brief indication of progress can be given but only with the patient's consent".

Consultation on revised guidelines was promised to be wide ranging in the interests of patients, the media and the NHS. A Bill to require newspapers to present news with due accuracy and impartiality; to secure the free dissemination of news and information in the public interest; to prescribe certain professional and ethical standards; to make provision with respect to enforcement, complaint and adjudication; and for commented purposes had its First Reading in the House of Commons on 10 June 1992. The Second Reading is likely to be during January/February 1993.

The Maastricht Treaty has been consuming a great deal of Parliamentary time, yet little if any references appear in public debate or discussions on the pertinent issues of health policy. The Treaty does contain several references to articles on health and notably a specific chapter on health promotion, disease prevention and research which together gives the European Commission (EC) competence in public health for the first time.

The UK had hoped to clarify Maastricht-led public health policy during its Presidency of the EC but . . . watch this space.

There are signs that the EC is moving towards concentrating public health matters in Directorate General V (DGV) responsible for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs. Health is likely to be one portfolio of several for which a Commissioner is likely to be named and who would be consulted on all health proposals. Readers may

note that DGV already has responsibility for a Special Programme of support for the reform of mental health care in Greece.

Ring-fencing becomes important again following a statement in the House of Lords on 22 October by Baroness Cumberlege when commenting upon the Secretary of State for Health's announcement of her intention to introduce a ring-fenced special transition grant for Community Care. She explained further that all the new money being transferred to local authorities next year from the social security budget will be ring-fenced. This in itself, she reassured the Lords, would ensure that some of the money will be spent on alcohol and drug services. However the ring-fencing of the total sum of money will give local authorities the flexibility (sic) to *decide* how much money they *wish* to spend on those specific services.

The debate in the House of Commons on 22 October on the Health of the Nation provided opportunity for all party support to the entry of mental illness as one of the key tasks of this policy statement. While no strong or strident protagonists emerged to champion the cause of mental illness, there was general accord that its inclusion among the key areas of health policy gave great cause for hope and scope for developments.

We can look forward to more relevant parliamentary business in November and December when Community Care is to be given special attention in the Lords and the Secretary of State for Health will be releasing the review of health and social services for mentally disordered offenders.

JOHN H. HENDERSON

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## Erratum

Election and Introduction of Honorary Fellows, Autumn Quarterly Meeting 1992, *Psychiatric Bulletin*, January 1993, 17, 54–55. Dr **Melvin Sabshin**. In several places in the citation Dr

Sabshin's first name was incorrectly spelt as Melvyn. Dr Sabshin was appointed Medical Director of the American Psychiatric Association in 1974.