

**From the President**  
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Rt Hon David Cameron MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
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*Dear Prime Minister*


I am writing to welcome the initiatives that you set out in your speech on 5 December 2011 and your vision to position the UK as the best place in the world to translate scientific discovery into clinical use. To achieve this goal, a holistic approach to the whole of the research and development pathway is necessary, which fosters productive links between the health service, industry and academia. Forging such alliances is central to the Academy's mission to ensure our population benefits from advances in medical science and the economic, and hence health, advantages that stem from a vibrant life science sector. I would like to offer our support in taking forward this agenda, which will be an important focus for my Presidency.

We believe the creation of new Academic Health Science Networks as hubs not only for innovation, but as a framework for applied health research, diffusion of evidence and research-informed education throughout England, could be genuinely transformational. Such regional Networks will complement our globally competitive Academic Health Science Centres, which are gaining increasing international recognition and establishing creative new partnerships. It will be important that there is a common vision for the new Networks and we look forward to working with the Chief Medical Officer in their development.

The Government rightly recognises that inappropriate research regulation can be detrimental to both patients and industry; and we welcome the progress that has been made following the publication of the Academy's 2011 report, 'A new pathway for the regulation and governance of health research'. We are also pleased to see that an 'Early Access' scheme is being considered that would provide patients with innovative new treatments more quickly. We note your intention to establish a group of experts to meet quarterly to discuss all healthcare regulation issues and would be pleased to contribute to its work. The 'Early Access' scheme will also address some of the funding challenges faced by small and medium biotechnology companies. We are supportive of this and other initiatives such as the Biomedical Catalyst Fund that are aimed at supporting this economically important sector.

Central to the reformed NHS is the empowerment of patients, which includes empowering them to participate in research and drive the adoption of new advances within the health service. Partnerships between clinicians, researchers and patients are vital to realise this ambition. Facilitating access to patient data (with appropriate safeguards) will make it easier for patients to take part in research, which is known to benefit participants and we welcome your commitment to a consultation on this important issue.

Finally, I am delighted to see that you have made a strong commitment to monitor the progress and impact of these new initiatives with the help of the Academy's former President, Professor Sir John Bell FRS HonFREng FMedSci and Mr Chris Brinsmead. This will instil confidence across the sector. We look forward to supporting them and the new Life Sciences Advisory Board in their work.

*Yours sincerely*  


cc Rt Hon Andrew Lansley CBE MP  
Rt Hon David Willetts MP  
Dame Sally Davies DBE FMedSci  
Mr George Freeman MP