NHS
East Midlands

News Release – Monday 3rd August 2009

New top up policy launched in the East Midlands

Patients in the East Midlands now have the option to access and pay for additional private treatments over and above the free care they can receive on the NHS.

'Top up' payments used to mean that patients who chose to buy extra treatment or medication would lose their entitlement to free care on the NHS. Now in the East Midlands, a new policy has been introduced giving those who pay for additional care the opportunity to do so without having to fund the cost of their NHS care too.

The policy has been written by the East Midlands Specialised Commissioning Group (EMSCG) on behalf of all nine primary care trusts in the region and follows the release of national Department of Health guidance in March this year.

Under the new policy, following advice from their consultant or due to personal choice, a patient may decide to privately top up their care if they believe it will improve their health and when specific treatments or drugs are not available through their local NHS.

A regional leaflet has been written in support of the policy. It is entitled 'Private healthcare – topping up your NHS treatment. Your questions answered' and will be available from next month in hospitals across the region and in some GP surgeries. It will include information on:

- What is private top up care is and why it might be needed
- How to get private top up care and who can provide it
- Whether private top up care can be received at the same time as NHS treatment

Kate Caston, director of the EMSCG said: "The policy has been put in place to ensure patients living in the East Midlands wanting to 'top up' their care are able to do so easily. This is great news because it prevents the handful of situations found

previously where patients who had chosen to pay privately for part of their treatment had, as a result, to pay for all their care – including any treatment they would have received free on the NHS."

ENDS Word count: 342

For further information please contact the NHS East Midlands Communication Team on 0115 9684468.

Notes to Editors

- For a copy of the leaflet please log on to: www.eastmidlands.nhs.uk/news
- For a full copy of the East Midlands top up payments policy *Defining the boundaries between NHS and private healthcare* please log on to: http://www.emscg.nhs.uk/PoliciesandPublications-Policies-ApprovedPolicies.cms
- For more information about the national DH top up payments guidance please visit: www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_096428
- About NHS East Midlands:
  NHS East Midlands is the headquarters of the NHS in the East Midlands and was formally established on 1 July 2006, replacing the former Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland Strategic Health Authority and Trent Strategic Health Authority
  NHS East Midlands provides strategic leadership to NHS organisations in the counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland
  The role of NHS East Midlands is to ensure that local health systems operate effectively and efficiently and that national standards and priorities are met in order to continually improve services for patients
  The organisation works in partnership with local NHS trusts, regional government and other partners. NHS East Midlands is ultimately accountable to the Secretary of State for Health.
- About the East Midlands Specialised Commissioning Group:
  The East Midlands Specialised Commissioning Group was established in 2007 with responsibility for planning, buying and managing all specialised services which treat patients with rare conditions.
  It has an annual budget of £600m and works on behalf of all PCTs in the NHS East Midlands area.