**Immediate Release: Wednesday, 16 March**

**BMA response to the Chancellor’s budget**

Responding to today’s budget from the Chancellor and the lack of new resources for the NHS, Dr Mark Porter, BMA Council Chair, said:

“It is disgraceful given the crisis facing the NHS that there was no promise of extra funding for a health service that is buckling under pressure from rising patient demand, falling resources and staff shortages. Hospitals and GP practices around the country are at breaking point and need urgent, extra investment to maintain even basic care to their patients.

“The political rhetoric does not match the reality on the ground of an NHS in crisis. The government’s funding promises have simply not materialised.”

Responding to the government’s proposals for a new sugar tax, Baroness Shelia Hollins, BMA Board of Science Chair, said:

“The chancellor’s decision to introduce a new levy on excessive sugar in soft drinks is a welcome step forward and a move called for in the BMA’s recent Food for Thought report1. This is an important initiative that could help to begin to address the obesity crisis amongst young children, although the delay in introducing it for two years is disappointing.

“More needs to be done to invest in proper preventive measures that protect people’s lives and the public’s resources. The implementation of minimum alcohol unit pricing is still also badly needed given the billions spent on the impact of excessive alcohol consumption.”

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. The BMA’s Food for Thought report can be read here. <<http://www.bma.org.uk/foodforthought>>

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