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9.1.2018

David John Rowlands AM
Chair – Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Dear Mr Rowlands

re Prescription drug dependence and withdrawal - recognition and support.

I write to express my support for this petition, which I have already signed.

It will soon be fifty years since my medical graduation. Social Psychiatry and Therapeutic Communities were making huge differences to the way that psychiatric patients were treated at that time, and it was my very good fortune to work with Dr David Clark at Fulbourn Hospital, and Dr Maxwell Jones, at Dingleton Hospital. The concern shown by both men to avoid medication as much as possible, while understanding and optimising a person's milieu had a lasting effect on my approach to mental health.

For more than three decades after my return to join my father in general practice in Maesteg, in 1972, I worked with my partners in practice in an industrial valley, with high morbidity rates, high consultation rates, but without an appointment system. Our prescribing costs and use of anxiolytics and antidepressants were well below the average for Wales. Our practice population was very stable, we declined the very many people who wished to join the practice.

We tried to give people with complex problems more time, rather than more medication.

Since retirement from full time NHS work in 2005, I have continued to work as a part time GP locum.

I undertook Tropical Medicine training before retiring, and have worked, annually, for extended periods, in six developing countries.

I have had extensive experience in homeopathic practice, within the NHS, for 30 years.

My wife and I have provided a free weekly homeopathic clinic for asylum seekers, in Swansea, for five years.

I provide a weekly homeopathic session for Sandville Court self-care centre, near Porthcawl.

I see children who are referred with behaviour problems, ASD, ADHD etc.

I do no private practice, non-NHS patients may donate to African charities.

Because of the great variety of people who consult me, from many different backgrounds and practices, I have an insight into the prescribing habits of doctors over a wide area.

Many of the asylum seekers we see have been put on psychotropics when living temporarily in England.

