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Dear Mr Redwood

Thank you for your letter of 8 August regarding the concerns of your constituents about the Institute's appraisal of bortezomib (Velcade) for the treatment of multiple myeloma, details of which can be found on the NICE website at [www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=282557](http://www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=282557).

Draft recommendations issued by the independent advisory committee went out to public consultation for a period of three weeks, and this closed on 14 August. The advisory committee is due to meet again on 6 September to consider the comments received, and final recommendations will be published subsequently. The anticipated publication date for this appraisal is September 2006. This date is, however, provisional as the process we follow allows stakeholders the opportunity to appeal, if they wish.

I know that the independent advisory committee's provisional guidance will have come as a disappointment to people with this condition and those who care for them. The members of the committee were certainly aware that multiple myeloma is a rare and aggressive cancer and that the treatment options available are limited.

However, the difficult job the advisory committee has to do is to balance the additional therapeutic benefit Velcade offers, to the extent that it does, with resources the NHS would have to apply to enable its routine use. As you know, each decision to spend money in the NHS has an opportunity cost and the cost effectiveness analysis we use in our technology appraisals helps us to assess its extent. In the case of Velcade, the advisory committee believes, on the basis of the current evidence, that it is too high to justify its use outside clinical trials.

Cost is a consideration in our appraisals, but what really drives the judgement that needs to be made about the value of a new drug is the extent of the additional therapeutic benefit it brings. In the case of Velcade, there just is not enough additional benefit, relative to its cost and based on current evidence, to support its widespread use.

I hope that you find this information useful.

Yours sincerely

**Andrew Dillon**  
Chief Executive