

UK health chief criticized for push to sequence all National Health users

GeneWatch UK today criticised a speech by the new NHS England Chief Executive Simon Stevens, in which he reportedly argued that the NHS must be transformed to make people's personal genetic information the basis of their treatments (1).

"Stevens appears shockingly ignorant of the irrelevance of genetic information to most people's care" said Dr Helen Wallace, Director of GeneWatch UK, "Plans to sequence everybody's genomes in the NHS are driven by commercial interests and are not in the public interest".

Successive governments have made attempts to build a DNA database in the NHS in England by stealth, by sequencing every baby at birth and storing whole genomes in electronic medical records, a plan backed by Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt (2). The current version of this plan would involve sharing whole or partial DNA sequences (genomes or genotypes) with companies like Google, which would use genetic information and health data to calculate personal risk assessments for feedback to patients (3). Massive investment from taxpayers would be required as part of a public-private partnership that allowed commercial exploitation of the data.

Read the full, original story: [GeneWatch UK PR: Genetic information is irrelevant to most people's care](#)