

## Consultant 24

1 May 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

I write regarding the action of BUPA and its place in the health care market. I am an Orthopaedic surgeon.

I have developed a private practice over the following years. The remuneration from the private healthcare companies have changed little or anything in that time, whilst the cost of doing business - secretarial support, malpractice insurance, room rental etc has rocketed.

There is no set fee structure amongst the insurance companies, but BUPA tend to pay the least.

The traditional, and previously agreed way to treat private patients was for the General Practitioner to refer the patient direct to the Consultant, the Consultant would see the patient discuss their condition and together decided what course of action to take.

It is becoming increasingly obvious that BUPA are interfering with this system to their own end. Patients are asked to phone up BUPA for an authorisation code, and when they do are sometimes advised that they must go and see one of their doctors. These doctors are often junior surgeons who have been forced to sign a BUPA contract limiting their remuneration, thus saving BUPA money. The GP's are often not aware of this, nor am I as the patient often does not report this back to the original surgeon, assuming this is standard practice.

BUPA given their market share are in the process of reducing our fees - especially arthroscopies - reducing our remuneration from £548 to £ 289. This is less than the private hospitals pay for FCN work were there is no cost of insurance, secretarial support or running the private practice. This has been undertaken without explanation or justification.

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