

## Consultant 67

11 July 2012

Following a sudden 60% reduction in fees for cataract surgery (fees that had not altered for 18 years), I chose to leave the BUPA consultant partnership.

Our local optometrists have all now received instructions from BUPA to avoid named referrals and also bypass the patient's GP.

BUPA have asked the optometrists to instruct patients to ring BUPA directly who will then advise the patient of local 'BUPA recognised *fee assured*' consultants. [✂] All of my experienced [✂] colleagues have also opted out of the partnership. The only remaining surgeons will be newly appointed and relatively inexperienced.

This arrangement is clearly financially driven. It undermines the premise that individuals should be allowed to choose a provider based on clinical excellence, experience and reputation. This is knowledge that will often be readily available to the patient's GP.

BUPA seem to have forgotten that the agreement exists between the doctor and the patient. They may be free to define the terms of their remuneration within this arrangement, but should not seek to influence the very nature of this relationship.