

Consultant 117

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As a practitioner who sees BUPA insured members, I have been concerned about the recent change in their approach. Previously, I felt that patients insured with BUPA were guaranteed that the costs of private care would be fully funded. Now, I am hearing many stories about BUPA refusing to cover legitimate costs of private care. BUPA claim to be concerned about the quality of healthcare, yet their advice to patients about specialists is entirely focussed on whether the specialist is 'fee-assured'. Surgeon's fees have been reduced by as much as 60% in some procedures without discussion or negotiation. BUPA has dominated the private healthcare insurance market in the UK and considers it is in a position to exert pressure on practitioners to reduce fees or face 'de-recognition' based upon price only. There is no data available from BUPA about quality, audit, or standards of care to permit the public to discriminate between specialists.