

Consultant 173

20 November 2012

Hi

I understand you are interested in individual stories about competition issues...

I am a consultant gastroenterologist in [redacted] working mainly in the NHS but with a [redacted] private practice.

About 4 weeks ago I saw a patient who is in senior management running a company. I had seen him about 2 years ago relating to his colitis and he had got lost to follow up because he was well. He had 2 flare ups recently and wanted to come back to see me. He told BUPA this and they told him that he couldn't come to see me and suggested 2 other consultants in [redacted] who were "approved" – or words to that effect (he lives in [redacted]). He was not at all happy with this and wanted to come back to see me but BUPA stuck their necks out and said that they wanted him to see someone else. At this point he told them that his company had a contract with them covering 450 employees which was shortly up for renewal and that if they didn't agree to him seeing me then they would renew their contract elsewhere. They capitulated and allowed him to see me.

To me this seems to be a large insurance company using their market position in a way to bully doctors into accepting less favourable terms of remuneration etc. as I suspect these other doctors have different agreements with BUPA.

I am very concerned about this sort of behaviour from an insurer with whom I am registered and am considering taking this up with them – although I am not sure who I would speak to.