

Consultant 211

12 February 2013

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to report my concerns about the behaviour of BUPA insurers.

I am a consultant [redacted] who specialises in the management of [redacted] and I have a specific subspecialty interest [redacted]

I practise privately with clinics at [redacted] Spire and my private practice mirrors my NHS one.

I provide a long initial appointment, with minimum time spent 45 minutes, and the majority would spend 60-75 minutes, occasionally much longer as required. My follow up is typically 20 minutes but may require longer in complex cases.

[redacted]

I charge [£350-£400] per new and [£150-£200] per follow up to take into account that I typically spend a lot longer with these patients than I would if I were simply seeing a general [redacted] disorder. Most of my colleagues provide 30 minute new and 15 minute follow up.

I am referred patients from around the whole of the UK on a regular basis and not infrequently see patients referred from Ireland, Isle of Man, Channel Islands, and Europe (eg Denmark, Holland), occasionally further afield.

[redacted]

Despite all of this, BUPA have refused to recognise me as a [redacted] specialist or [redacted] to their members. Many patients who have seen me say that BUPA will not let them know about me or acknowledge my expertise. I have had generic letters to them on many occasions saying my fees are not justified. [redacted]

[redacted]

I have searched BUPA [redacted] and my name is not listed, [redacted]

I am being told by patients who have waited weeks to see me that BUPA at the last minute has said they can not see me as my fees are too much and they have been told they can not make up the shortfall either - BUPA have said to me that they can not allow patients to make up any shortfall if they wish to see me and they will not allow any such consultation.

[redacted]

I believe patients are being denied an opportunity for management of a highly disabling [redacted] condition by BUPA who fail to recognise my practice or even understand that my fees per minute are no more costly than colleagues and who fail to recognise that I am popular because my results in those patients considered untreatable is actually excellent in the majority. [redacted]

BUPA have in my view deliberately been obstructive and deaf to my numerous complaints, they have ignored the rights and wishes of patients over and over, they have denied patients an opportunity to see someone who truly takes time and applies significant expertise with very good results, despite their pleading with BUPA to be allowed to be seen, and they have

not offered any alternative practitioners who have genuine and well regarded expertise in this area. [✂]

BUPA clearly is only interested in cost and not quality and they are short-sighted as my management of this difficult group of patients generally stops multiple GP visits, multiple casualty admissions, inappropriate operations and many inappropriate visits to other medical clinics (general medical, allergy, respiratory, gastro, psychiatry, cardiac etc etc).

I thought you ought to be aware of BUPA's unethical approach and the numerous verbal complaints I have received from patients who feel they have been denied the choice to see someone who they feel gives them the best hope of recovery from a highly disabled and thoroughly miserable life),