

Consultant 210

14 February 2013

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to express my concern and disappointment regarding the way BUPA's call centre have handled a patient who requested to be referred to me by name. This patient sustained a fracture of his [X] and called BUPA to request an appointment to see me and I am alarmed that he was advised initially I am not a member of the BUPA panel. Following which he contacted my secretary and she gave him my BUPA provider number and again the call centre would not authorise him to see me. At that stage the patient contacted my secretary again and she rang BUPA to ascertain why this patient as not authorised for a consultation. She was told there are certain criteria for referral and when this was listed, I appeared to fulfil the criteria. The patient however was told he has an open referral policy and he would be referred to another consultant. Interestingly, two of the other consultants mentioned were [X] specialists and none of them are on the BUPA premier consultant panel but fee assured as I am. I not only feel disappointed but discriminated against by BUPA. I am the only [X] consultant who runs a [X] in my private practice in [X]. Patients needing investigations such as scans are usually arranged on the same day so as to cut the number of follow up consultations and subsequently cost to the patient and their insurance company.

I am therefore somewhat amazed that this patient was diverted in such a way that would not serve him best interest. I am disappointed that the patient was deprived of the expertise from [X] surgery to be passed to a [X] surgeon who does not carry out fixation of this type of [X] on a regular basis and this would result in a second referral being required to the correct specialist at a later date.

I have been told that BUPA has quality as its core care of their patients. However, on this occasion it does seem this has happened. I am therefore most disappointed as to the way this was handled.

Incidentally this patient is now coming to have his operation on the NHS under my care.