

Consultant 223

23 March 2013

I am a consultant urologist in private practice for [X] years. I believe the tactics of BUPA in particular, but also AXA PPP, are unfair, discriminatory, and a result of a monopoly situation over private medical practitioners.

3 points:

1. A key element of private healthcare is that patients can pay to choose the doctor, place and time of their treatment, and many would believe that this is what they are paying extra for. However with the NHS 'choose and book' system in place across the country, it is ironic that an NHS patient can have more choice than a BUPA patient.

If BUPA patients were aware of this, and realise that what they are paying extra for is actually a system that prevents (as opposed to guarantees) them from seeing senior consultants on top of their game, they would be horrified and no doubt leave in droves. I am sure this will happen anyway if these ridiculous practices are allowed to continue.

2. A senior colleague who sticks to BUPA fees is part of a BUPA scheme rewarded an extra 10% of total billing at the end of the year. When I called them to join this scheme I was told it was now closed for new members. Therefore 2 colleagues are being paid different fees for the same work in the same hospital - a clear case of discrimination against new consultants.

3. An emergency in-patient under my care for 3 days asked if she could be transferred to one of 2 (BMI and Nuffield) private hospitals I work at and to continue under my care there - only to be told by her insurer go to a private hospital 20 miles away under a different consultant's care with no knowledge of the circumstances of that admission. Only when my colleague 20 miles away called me to ask what was going on was this crazy manouvre averted.