

## Consultant 12

18 September 2013

Dear Ms Hawes,

I am a private independent General Practitioner committed to providing the best possible care for my patients. I am writing to you out of concern that my freedom to use my expertise to make private referrals of my patients to specific consultants is being threatened. I think it is fair to say that patients pay to come and see me and trust me to make the best possible referral to get the best possible opinion and treatment for their particular condition. I pride myself that if I do not know who the best person is I will research to find the right one for my patient. This is an important part of the service I provide and will determine the success of the outcome for the patient. The thought that this service will be vetoed by the insurance companies is frankly plain dangerous and will lead to potential poor management and less successful outcomes. I think it is an infringement of my professional freedom and I wish to lodge my objection in the strongest possible terms.

If these plans are allowed to go ahead it means that insurance companies will be making decisions for patients that should be made by professionally qualified individuals. I believe that the insurance companies are influenced only by costs so that they discriminate against consultants who are more senior and experienced and who have been involved in research and so may have higher fees. Furthermore they are dominating our patients and not even allowing the patient to see a 'more expensive consultant' and pay the difference. Hence the insurance companies are dominating us all and surely this cannot be allowed to happen because in the end quality of care is going to suffer.