

Consultant/GP 20

20 September 2013

I am writing in response to the CC questioning the knowledge and familiarity GPs have of the specialists to whom they refer.

As an independent sector GP i obviously am not writing on behalf of NH - nevertheless a considerable part of specialist insurance work will come from/via GPs in this sector. One of the main reasons patients who need referrals come to this sector is for the very reason that we are familiar with our specialists and have close contact with them. Our selection process may be through colleague recommendation, attending lectures given by them, correspondence from them, seeing them at medical meetings etc. Our very role is dependent upon having close relationships with the doctors to whom we refer. The current particular relevance of this is to 'open referral' which deprives patients of our experience with selcted consultants. Whilst completely understanding that PMIs are under enormous financial pressures to suggest that insurance companies can refer as well as GPs is frankly ridiculous. If our consultants charge more than the PMIs are prepared to pay surely the patient has the right to say i wish to pay the extra (top ups). An example was an elderly lady i referred to a highly experienced surgeon with both good reputation both for me and 'word - of-mouth'. When told by the PMI he charged more than the PMI was prepared to pay her response was 'Of course, he is the best- that is why i wish to see him'. Whilst not everyone can see 'the best'- not a concept i really endorse- the most experienced, senior, specialists are generally the ones most sought for these reasons.