

Consultant 2

22 January 2014

Healthcare Investigation

Dear Sir

There is universal agreement that the current arrangements in the independent healthcare market, both by providers and insurance companies, is a closed shop and inhibits competition and choice for patients. The latest report does address quite a number of long standing issues but continues to ignore perhaps the most important matter of recognising new entrants to the healthcare provider market. Encouragement of choice for patients and competition requires larger number of recognised providers who operate independently. Recognition by insurance companies remains monopolised by the larger healthcare providers and recognition of the independent providers continues to be declined.

My own first-hand experience provides a good example of the problem. In 2013 I setup a brand new specialist clinic for [✂] surgery. The setup of the clinic, including installation of specialist equipment, was to provide a state of the art outpatient and minor operative facility. The CQC inspection reports have recognised the impeccable setup of the clinic facilities and its policies. The pricing of procedures and investigation was set at a level at least 50% below that of the local providers (where I have admitting rights to). The application for registration of my clinic as a provider was rejected by AXA-PPP, BUPA and Aviva. The insurance companies did not provide any explanation and after the several telephone calls, I was told unofficially that such requests are declined in order not to upset the local major providers. There is no mechanisms for appeal. My clinic remains not recognised by any of the major UK insurance companies.

The private healthcare competition investigation is a great opportunity to improve the quality, choice, affordability and accessibility of independent healthcare to a larger proportion of the population. The right of CQC registered providers to be registered with the insurance companies is a major step towards this goal.