

Consultant 13

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I am a consultant gastroenterologist working in two group practices at The Lister Hospital and London Bridge Hospital. I was interested to read the recommendations from the Competition Commission regarding the divestiture of HCA hospitals in London.

I am disappointed that the Commission made this recommendation as I firmly believe that this will adversely affect the care that me, and my colleagues, are currently able to provide. These hospitals have an international reputation as evidenced by the number of patients from overseas treated here. HCA has also encouraged me to build up a group practice with other abdominal specialists, thus providing more effective treatment, mirroring as it does, our practice in the NHS. Allied to this is the strong commitment at London Bridge Hospital of holding regular clinical audit meetings (of which I am a member) where audit projects are planned and results discussed – in line with NICE guidelines. I introduced two innovative gastrointestinal investigations and was very impressed both with the support I was given but also with the rigour that the audit group assessed my proposal to ensure that it was NICE approved and could be delivered safely and effectively in the private sector.

The management at HCA has also been supportive in helping my group develop effective management pathways similar to those in the NHS which enable effective, rapid and safe management. With their support we are now able to provide direct-access endoscopies and an outpatient Biological drug infusion service. These measures have improved patient care whilst reducing both waiting times and cost.

Modern healthcare must be delivered through the practice of evidence-based clinical guidelines with safety a paramount concern. I can attest to HCA's commitment to providing this model and I am confident that my patients are provided the highest quality of care at their hospitals. I am very concerned that the Competition Commission's decision will seriously affect quality healthcare provision in London and hamper the innovative practices that my group are developing.