

Consultant 39

4 February 2014

Dear Mr. Witcomb

I am a consultant orthopaedic surgeon with a private practice at the Wellington Hospital and the London Bridge Hospital. I have been in full time private practice in London since [REDACTED]. I have great experience therefore as to how the private healthcare market works.

I would like to state that in my view and in many people's view London is now the capital of the world being the most culturally and ethically diverse major city in the world. Health tourism is a major industry with patients flying in from all corners for our first class private medical care. There are also a large number of wealthy foreigners living and working in London who rely on and who expect and deserve the best private medical care. I have seen the facilities steadily improve within HCA over the last decade with massive infrastructure investment which has required close cooperation with consultants working within these facilities to expand and develop a huge range of cutting edge services. I have worked at other non HCA sites and have found them to be significantly substandard compared to HCA.

I am extremely concerned that should HCA be forced to sell The London Bridge Hospital, the quality of care provided - indeed the whole atmosphere of the hospital will deteriorate with a change of management/ownership. London Bridge, since HCA took it over has grown to develop into a first class hospital and I fully suspect that this would be significantly downgraded under new owners. HCA has continually impressed me with its readiness to invest in its facilities, to work with and listen to its medical and surgical consultants, to invest in new equipment and treatments so as to provide the best possible service to patients. I strongly suspect that this would not be the case under new owners where the emphasis is more likely to be on cost cutting than ensuring first class patient care.

As a case in point, HCA has made an immense investment of both time and money with a view to opening a very large out patients centre over two floors in the Shard. I have been peripherally involved in trying to ensure that this process goes forward. I was very much looking forward to practicing at this new centre which was sure to be world class as are indeed all of HCA's facilities. I am certain that, should HCA be forced to sell the London Bridge plan for this new out patients centre at the Shard, will be abandoned and this opportunity lost forever much to the detriment of private health care in the city and the South East.

I therefore strongly oppose any proposal that would see the London Bridge Hospital sold to another hospital operator.