

Consultant 87

2 February 2014

Dear Sir

Re Competition Commission Recommendations for London Bridge Hospital

I am writing to express my concern with respect to the Competition Commission's recommendations that HCA divest itself of London Bridge Hospital (LBH). I have been a consultant for over [X] years and during that time have worked in several different private hospitals as well as in the private facilities of major London Teaching Hospitals. London Bridge Hospital since it has been owned by HCA is, in all respects, the most outstanding private hospital in which to undertake all aspects of neurosurgical practice. The quality and range of care received by patients is the most comprehensive of any private facility I have worked in. The hospital has responded to the needs of its clinicians by investing in specialist personnel and equipment in addition to attracting the most outstanding clinicians (many who are leaders and innovators in their field) whose expertise provides exemplary overlapping multidisciplinary care. This ensures that LBH is the first choice of patients who want the best medical and surgical services available in the private sector.

In terms of innovation, HCA has been at the forefront in the development of a multidisciplinary brain tumour service at London Bridge Hospital. This requires a wide range of interlocking services which include specialist neurosurgical operating theatres with specialised equipment (operating microscopes, neuronavigation, ultrasonic aspirators and microinstruments) coupled with an intensive care unit staffed by intensivists specifically trained in managed neurosurgical patients, 24 hour brain scanning, wards staffed with neurosurgically trained nurses, clinical nurse specialists and a full range of allied therapists.

An additional innovation was the support for clinicians to hold a regular multidisciplinary neuro-oncology meeting at which each stage of a brain tumour patient's management is formulated and followed through. This includes prospective data collection, full IT and audio-visual support, on line availability of scan and clinical information and outcome data. This is a national standard for the NHS but not widely practiced in the private sector. HCA continues to support, promote and develop this endeavour which remains a benchmark for the private sector.

I have no hesitation in stating that London Bridge Hospital under HCA management provides exemplary care for all different types of neurosurgical patients which surpasses any other private facility I have worked in. HCA continues to invest in improvements and developments to the neurosurgical services at LBH. The hospital puts the patients first and is synonymous with excellence in neurosurgical care of both emergency and elective cases. Specialists and general practitioners refer their patients to LBH because they respect its commitment to excellence, its robust clinical governance structure and the expertise of the consultants and allied healthcare professionals.

HCA should not be penalized or compromised for offering such a gold standard of care. To divest HCA of London Bridge Hospital would be likely to substantially degrade the excellence of what has been built up at London Bridge Hospital over a number of years, and would lead to a drop in the standards of care offered to neurosurgical patients. It seems strange that the Competition Commission would propose a course of action that would compromise such an outstanding level of service and commitment to excellence, which leads to such high standards of patient care. I trust that you will reconsider your decision to require HCA to divest itself of London Bridge Hospital for the future of our patients.