

## **Consultant 159**

26 October 2012

Dear Sir, Madam

I would like to raise the matter of how private insurance companies manipulate the private practice market.

As an independant private practitioner I am answerable to The Royal College of Surgeons and The General Medical Council who authorize my competence to practice.

As in any open market I should be entitled to charge depending on complexity and uniqueness of service, this should be highlighted to the patient who then can decide if they wish to continue with my care. The open market can eventually find equilibrium of price, too many surgeons or an often performed surgery may mean cheaper prices than the more complex tertiary referrals.

At present larger insurance companies decide the reimbursement for procedures which in fifteen years of practice have only declined. Interestingly they do not pass this message to those whom they insure but to the medical practitioners who if charge even nominally over their prescribed rates are blacklisted and the patients are told that the doctor overcharges. During the same time as reducing imbursement to practitioners, the same large companies have disproportionately increased their subscription rates. These companies claim to be health providers but are nothing of the sort as any patient with a chronic condition is immediately dropped from their scheme. The reality is they maintain their profit margin and try to manipulate the market to their advantage.

In any open market the competition may drive the cost of insurance down and some of the monolithic providers who have high costs and payments to their boards and executives are fighting to protect their own patch.

Ultimately a safe, timely, efficient and high quality service to the patient is what ensures privately-funded healthcare to continue. This is provided by the medical practitioners. The Medical practitioners have a responsibility to provide the highest level, appropriate and responsible care to the patient and if the insurance companies have concerns regarding a practice then that should be reviewed through the appropriate channels of The GMC or The Royal Colleges. At present The insurance companies use the excuse of what they call excesses in certain practice to justify their blanket cost cutting exercise.