

Celebrate and Defend the NHS

Today is the 63rd birthday of the National Health Service. As a publicly provided, publicly accountable, coordinated, integrated system of universal healthcare funded by taxation and mainly free to patients, the NHS is our most valuable public institution.

Today, the Government continues its stampede to convert the NHS to a commercial health market, in which "Any Qualified Provider" can compete while corporations give advice on who should be chosen to supply the services. There is no evidence that this will improve healthcare.

After a massive public outcry, the Coalition Government held its Listening Exercise and drafted Amendments to the Health and Social Care Bill. They told us they had listened and that they had fixed the Bill, parts of which are being re-examined.

But the long-term plan to privatise the NHS is still in place. With all the Government amendments the Bill will still:

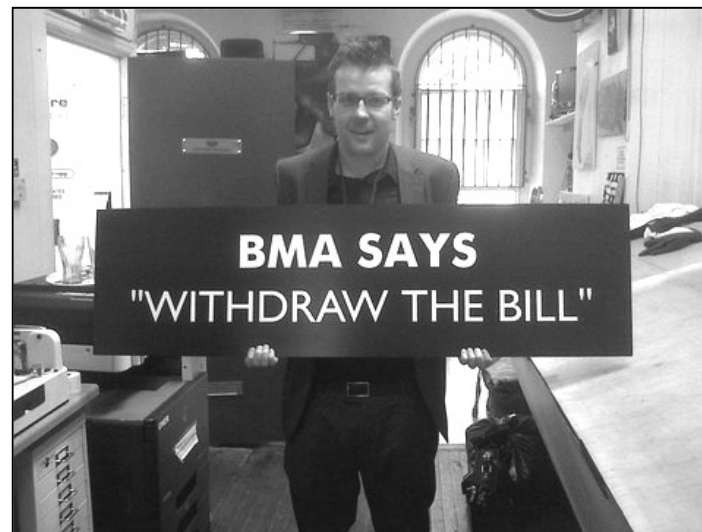


National Blood Service workers fight privatisation threat

- allow competition in a commercial health market where patients choose between different suppliers rather than choosing how they want to be treated by the NHS
- outlaw any Government policy to make the NHS the "preferred provider" and use the economic regulator Monitor to stop local commissioners from favouring NHS services – now called "anti-competitive behaviour"!
- remove the Secretary of State's responsibility to provide or secure a comprehensive health service
- threaten to reduce the NHS to a safety net for emergency care



Vote down the Health Bill!



Last week the British Medical Association voted to call for the Bill to be withdrawn, and the NHS to be the "preferred provider" of healthcare. The British Medical Journal says "Bury the Bill!".

UNISON and UNITE also call for the Bill to be scrapped.

- force hospitals to become Foundation Trusts, competing with each other and the private sector
- leave clinical regulation in the hands of the Care Quality Commission, who failed to stop the Winterbourne View abuse scandal

All this while the NHS is facing £20 billion in cuts over 4 years. Staffing, beds and services are being cut right now. The private sector is already involved in commissioning.

It is a recipe for chaos and major public health disasters. Poorer people who can't afford to go private will bear the brunt.

We congratulate the British Medical Association for calling for the Bill to be withdrawn, and for the NHS to be the "preferred provider".

What You Can Do:

- ✓ Write to your MP telling them why they should vote against the Bill.
- ✓ Write to your Councillors telling them why MPs from their Party should vote against the Bill.
- ✓ Discuss the issue at work and with your friends.
- ✓ Talk to your GP, nurses and health visitors to express your concerns, and encourage them to speak out.
- ✓ Write to the press. Phone the radio.
- ✓ Get in touch and help us:

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Vote down the Health Bill!